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"EASIER SAID THAN DONE": PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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“EASIER SAID THAN DONE”: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

by

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Dedication

For My Parents,

Ronald and Cheryl Braud

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As a college undergraduate, I remember telling my friends that I wanted to be a professional student. Since first uttering those words in 1992, I have spent twelve out of the last fifteen years doing just that. At the completion of each degree, I proudly declared it would be my last. It never was. With me during the pursuit of each degree were my parents, Ronald and Cheryl Braud. They have spent countless hours on the phone with me as I shared successes, frustrations, and fears over the years. In addition to their love and support, they have provided me with the encouragement and optimism that has helped me through the difficult times. Thank you for believing in me.

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"Easier Said Than Done": Pre-service Teachers and Multicultural Education

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This qualitative dissertation explores the beliefs of 15 pre-service teachers who completed their apprentice teaching semester in diverse early childhood classrooms. The pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms and the experiences the pre-service teachers attributed to having influenced and/or challenged their prior beliefs are of particular interest in this study. An analysis of interview data resulted in four themes. The first theme explores the participants' focus on their beliefs about how students learn, the role of the teacher in students' learning, and the importance of building a classroom community when asked to describe teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. The ways in which the participants marginalized multicultural education by limiting what it included and by reserving it for particular subject areas, grade levels, and groups of children is described in the second theme. The third theme details the experiences that altered the participants' prior beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms, including seeing difference, confronting prejudices,

observing teachers, and refining beliefs. In the final theme, I examine the instability found in the participants' beliefs with regard to language, difference, families, and holidays. A second phase of research, including interview, observation, and document data, resulted in two themes: adopting pedagogical approaches and reflecting on practice.

These findings lead to three conclusions for this study. First, pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms are more complex than previous research has suggested. Second, reflecting on beliefs and practice is essential to the development of multicultural education practices. However, reflection about diversity, by itself, does not help pre-service teachers with their practice during field placements. Pre-service teachers need opportunities to observe multicultural education practices to connect beliefs and theory to practice. Finally, teacher educators need to understand the prior experiences and beliefs of the pre-service teachers in their courses in order to plan a range of activities that meet pre-service teachers where they are and then take them where they need to go with regards to their beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms, so that these activities are effective for providing an interruption of prior beliefs.

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Chapter One: Introduction

> It is essential that student teachers come to conceive of multicultural education as an integral and embedded part of teaching and schools; every decision, action, assignment, organizational structure, and communicative act works either toward or against the goals of multicultural education.
>
> Grant & Zozakiewicz, 1995, p. 272

For more than 50 years, a challenge within the field of multicultural education has been how teacher education programs can prepare pre-service teachers to become teachers for all children (Grant & Agosto, 2006) and how they can help pre-service teachers view "multicultural education as an integral and embedded part of teaching and schools" (Grant & Zozakiewicz, 1995, p. 272). Researchers have written extensively of the need for infusing conversations about cultural diversity throughout teacher education programs as opposed to offering "stand-alone multicultural education courses" (Sleeter, 2001, p. 98). By embedding approaches to multicultural education and culturally relevant teaching in the preparation pre-service teachers receive, researchers hope to restructure the beliefs of the future teaching force, which researchers believe will reduce the inequities facing students presently underserved by the educational system.

Statements issued by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) suggest that multicultural education has been a priority in teacher education programs since the 1970s (Cochran-Smith, 2003). In 1972, the AACTE declared that cultural diversity was a valuable resource, multicultural education should preserve cultural diversity rather than simply tolerate it, and a commitment to cultural pluralism should be infused throughout teacher education programs. A similar commitment to cultural diversity was put forth by NCATE in 1976, when evidence of

addressing multicultural education in teacher education programs was added to the requirements and standards for institutions seeking accreditation (Cochran-Smith, 2003).

While many teacher education programs report incorporating multicultural education throughout their curriculum, external research has pointed to the contrary. Many programs have inserted courses on multicultural education, bilingual education, or urban education, but have left the overall curriculum unchanged and intact (Goodwin, 1997). Universities that do offer such courses often list these courses as optional, allowing students to complete their teacher preparation programs without receiving any coursework on cultural diversity (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

A CHANGING POPULATION

The population of students in our nation's public schools is changing. In 1980, 25.5% of children ages 5 through 17 were of a racial or ethnic minority background (National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 2005). Today the percentage of school-aged children in the United States who are of a racial or ethnic minority background has risen to 37.8%. Additionally, more than one out of every seven children in elementary and secondary schools speak a language other than English at home. According to the 2000 Census, the two groups seeing the most rapid growth in the United States are Latino (61%) and Asian (69%) populations (Zhou, 2003). However, the racial and ethnic populations living in the United States are not evenly distributed across the country, with most populations concentrated in certain large urban areas or geographical regions. For instance, 54% of African-Americans are located in the south; 43.4% of Latinos live in the West and 32.8% in the south; and 48.9% of Asians live in the West (Zhou, 2003).

It is expected that the "trend toward increasing diversity" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 20) will continue in our elementary and secondary schools. Projected statistics

indicate that by the year 2020, 46% of school-age children in the United States will be of a racial or ethnic minority background (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989). Other estimates project that by the year 2050, children of color will account for 57% of the population of students in elementary and secondary schools (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1996, in Cochran-Smith, 2003).

This is in striking contrast to the relative stability of the population of teachers in our nation's public schools. According to the NCES (2005), 78.2% of elementary and secondary public school teachers during the 1999-2000 academic school year were White. The NCES also reports that in the 2003-2004 academic school year 85.9% of the bachelor degrees in education conferred were awarded to graduates who identified themselves as White; 78.7% were White females. Therefore, it is a reasonable conclusion that the teaching force in the United States will remain a field dominated by White females teaching children of a racial or ethnic background different than their own.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Changes in student population are not limited to elementary and secondary students. A similar "trend toward increasing diversity" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 20) has been reported within the field of early childhood education. Early childhood classrooms are experiencing enrollment of children from increased racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds (Horm, 2003). Since children, from a young age, "readily notice, absorb, and behaviorally reflect the patterns of racial and economic privilege that permeate their environments" (Ramsey, 2004, p. 39), it is important for early childhood educators to help children "develop individual and group identities that will recognize and resist the false notions of racial superiority and racial entitlement" (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p. 3). Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2000) analyzed the most common multicultural education approaches used in early childhood classrooms: suppression of

cultural diversity; melting pot; add-on multiculturalism; bilingualism/biculturalism; and anti-bias multicultural education. These approaches are reviewed below.

Suppression of Cultural Diversity

This approach to multicultural education assumes that "everyone needs to be assimilated into the European-American culture to create a united nation" (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2000, p. 387). Therefore, in this approach, a European-American culture is considered to be superior to other cultures. When teachers use this approach in the classroom, students are discouraged from bringing their home language and culture to the classroom environment and are punished for speaking languages other than English in the classroom. Teachers who use this approach do not consider their students' emotional, social, and cognitive development nor do they consider the needs of their students' families (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2000).

Melting Pot

The melting pot approach also assumes that all cultures will and should assimilate into the culture of the United States, resulting in a shared culture. Since this approach regards a white, middle class, American culture as superior, students from other cultures are urged to give up their cultures and adopt an American culture. Teachers who apply a melting pot approach to the classroom view their students as equal, often adopting a colorblind stance to race, although cultures different from the dominant culture are still viewed as inferior (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2000). A teacher who uses the melting pot approach to multicultural education uses a curriculum that reflects a European-American culture and the reality of living in a diverse world is denied.

Add-on Multiculturalism

Instead of incorporating multicultural education throughout the curriculum, most teachers use an add-on approach, or a tourist approach, to multicultural education (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2000). In this approach, teachers focus on cultural celebrations, dance, food, and traditional clothing only during certain parts of the year. For example, teachers may have their students coloring a menorah for Hanukkah, eating with chopsticks for Chinese New Year, learning words in Spanish for Cinco de Mayo, and listening to stories about Martin Luther King, Jr. or Rosa Parks in February for Black History Month. This approach portrays cultures as "exotic" and allows children to return to the daily curriculum, which focuses on the dominant culture. Teachers who use this approach can reinforce stereotypes and misconceptions about cultures by focusing only on celebrations at certain times of the year.

Bilingualism/Biculturalism

In the bilingualism/biculturalism approach to multicultural education, children maintain their own culture and language in addition to learning the language and culture of the dominant culture. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2000) argued this helps students develop a positive self-identity. In a classroom where this approach is in practice, teachers would encourage children to speak in their home language while they learn the language and the cultural rules and norms of the dominant culture.

Anti-bias Multicultural Education

Anti-bias multicultural education assumes that society needs to be changed in order to provide equitable participation from all racial groups. This approach includes gender and differences in ability in addition to cultural diversity. In addition to expanding the definition of diversity, this approach "addresses the impact of stereotyping, bias, and

discriminatory behavior in young children's development and interactions" (Derman-Sparks & the A.B.C. Task Force, 1989). In the classroom, teachers are purposeful in selecting materials and providing children with activities and opportunities to develop respect for difference, to develop pride in themselves, and to challenge stereotypes.

While Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2000) advocated for this approach to multicultural education, they found that most early childhood educators used the add-on approach to multicultural education described above. Other researchers (Swadener, 1988) have found that early childhood educators primarily use a human relations approach to multicultural education, which emphasizes acceptance, unity, tolerance, and respect (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). While more teachers are aware of the damaging impact of discrimination on all children and the need for multicultural education (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006), increased academic standards for all students, including students in early childhood classrooms, have limited the flexibility early childhood teachers once had to teach in ways that is relevant to and meaningful for their students.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

In 1987, and revised in 1997, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the largest professional organization in the field of early childhood education, published the organization's position statement on developmentally appropriate practice to assist programs interested in obtaining NAEYC accreditation and to respond to the push toward "more formal, academic instruction of young children" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. v). As stated by Bredekamp and Copple (1997), the "emphasis on rote learning and whole-group instruction of narrowly defined academic skills" was taking place in schools "regardless of children's current interests, needs, and competencies" (p. v). Increased pressure for academic instruction in the earliest grades came in response to the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). While

NCLB targeted teachers and students in third through eighth grades, the impact of this legislation has been felt in the field of early childhood education.

In addition to supporting young children's development as outlined by *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), early childhood educators must begin the process of preparing their young students for the high-stakes standardized tests they will begin taking in third grade (Booher-Jennings, 2005). Although these changes have primarily impacted kindergarten teachers, who previously operated outside the demands of "real school" (Hatch, 2005), all early childhood teachers have felt the impact of this legislation as the curriculum has been pushed from one grade level to the grade level that precedes it and accountability has reached teachers of children in their first years of schooling (Hatch, 2002). This has limited the ability of early childhood teachers in public schools to teach in ways that are meaningful for and responsive to their students' strengths, interests, needs, prior knowledge, and social and cultural contexts – elements of both developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) and approaches to multicultural education (e.g., Banks, 1993, 1994, 1995; Blizek, 1999; Gay, 2000, 2002; Gonzalez et al., 1995; Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil, & Moll, 2001; Helms, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Moll, Tapia, & Whitmore, 1993; Sleeter & Grant, 1994; Velez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992).

PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AND PRIOR BELIEFS

Pre-service teachers have beliefs based on experiences with diverse populations that have influenced their "ways of thinking about teaching learners who are diverse" (Milner & Smithey, 2003, p. 294). However, engaging pre-service teachers in discussions about diversity, inequity, and stereotypes is often met with resistance (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Horm, 2003). For pre-service teachers who have little cross-cultural knowledge or

experience, they often bring to their teacher education programs attitudes and beliefs that will negatively impact the diverse students they teach (Horm, 2003; Sleeter, 2001; Townsend, 2002).

Research has shown that teachers hold lower expectations for African-American students than for White students and believe African-American children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are incapable of academic achievement (Artiles, Chow, & McClafferty, 1995; Winfield, 1986); view cultural differences as deficiencies rather than assets (Delpit, 1995; Horm, 2003); place the outcomes of success or failure on the children rather than on a biased curriculum (Raths, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002); and consider special education or remedial coursework for African-American and Latino children at disproportionate rates (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Bakari, 2003; Townsend, 2002). Without offering courses or field placements to challenge these beliefs, the inequities facing children presently underserved by the educational system are likely to continue.

In response, researchers and teacher educators have explored various ways to challenge pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching culturally diverse students. Researchers have examined how pre-service teachers' beliefs were challenged through courses on multicultural education or courses designed to address the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to teach in diverse classrooms (Artiles et al., 1995; Dee & Henkin, 2002; McDiarmid & Price, 1990; McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001; Middleton, 2002; Milner, 2006; Milner & Smithey, 2003); courses designed to explore self-identity (Conle et al., 2000; Lea, 2004; Santoro & Allard, 2005); courses exploring the use of language and literacy in the home, community, and school (Clark & Medina, 2000); field placements in diverse, urban schools (Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000; Gillette, 1996; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006); involvement in the communities in which the pre-service teachers are completing internships and student teaching (Burant & Kirby, 2002;

Hyland & Noffke, 2005; Seidl & Friend, 2002); correspondence with students of culturally diverse backgrounds (Schoorman, 2002); examination of children's literature (Brindley & Laframboise, 2002); journaling and reflection (Pewewardy, 2005) participation in service learning projects (Boyle-Baise, 2005); and participation in a cohort focused on teaching in diverse, urban classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

The pre-service teachers responded to these courses, field placements, and activities in a variety of ways. Some of the pre-service teachers wanted more opportunities to engage in discussions about diversity, hoped additional coursework would provide them ways to address diversity in a classroom setting, experienced a deepening of beliefs and commitments to multicultural education, and began to see difference as an opportunity for learning rather than viewing difference from a deficit perspective. However, other pre-service teachers in the same studies complained that too much time was spent on diversity, did not find differences between culturally diverse students and any other students, continued to express an interest in teaching White middle-class children, and did not translate a deeper awareness of self-identity to understanding the perspectives of others or how discrimination may impact the lives of the students they teach. The results of these studies point to the need for more research on how to prepare pre-service teachers to teach in culturally diverse schools, particularly when we consider the changes in the population of students in our public elementary and secondary schools.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Researchers have argued that the key to improving teacher education is the examination of teachers' beliefs (Pajares, 1992). According to Pintrich (1990), in Pajares (1992), "beliefs ultimately will prove the most valuable psychological construct to teacher education" (p. 308). If teacher educators want to understand teaching from the

perspective of teachers, they need to understand the beliefs that define teachers' work (Nespor, 1987). Given projected statistics on the growing number of students from a racial or ethnic minority background in early childhood and in our elementary and secondary schools, additional research is needed on pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms. With an increased understanding of pre-service teachers beliefs about diversity, teacher educators can design coursework and field placements that will better prepare their graduates to enter classrooms with the dispositions and skills needed to teach in diverse schools.

While there is significant empirical research exploring pre-service teachers' beliefs and diversity (e.g., Artiles et al., 1995; Bakari, 2003; Boyle-Baise, 2005; Brindley & Laframboise, 2002; Burant & Kirby, 2002; Causey et al., 2000; Clark & Medina, 2000; Conle et al., 2000; Dee & Henkin, 2002; Gillette, 1996; Hyland & Noffke, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Lea, 2004; McDiarmid & Price, 1990; McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001; Middleton, 2002; Milner, 2006; Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore, and Flowers, 2003; Milner & Smithey, 2003; Paine, 1989; Pewewardy, 2005; Santoro & Allard, 2005; Schoorman, 2002; Seidl & Friend, 2002), there remains a lack of research on pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classroom settings. Of the studies referenced above, only six (Artiles et al., 1995; Brindley & Laframboise, 2002; Gillette, 1996; Hyland & Noffke, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Seidl & Friend, 2002) specified that elementary pre-service teachers served as participants in their research, though the focus of these studies were not on pre-service teachers completing internships and student teaching in early childhood grades. To better understand pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms, this qualitative study explored the following research questions:

1. What are pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms?
2. What experiences do pre-service teachers attribute to having influenced and/or challenged their espoused beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms?

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

In this section, I will define terms that are central to this study: diversity, beliefs, multicultural education, pre-service teachers, early childhood education, and developmentally appropriate practice. These definitions are included to provide clarity and meaning of the terminology as used in this study. These terms are introduced here and described more completely in Chapter Two: Review of the Literature, where I have presented the theoretical framework for this study.

Diversity

In research on teachers' beliefs and diversity, the term diversity was defined in a variety of ways. Au and Blake (2003) referred to social class, ethnicity, and primary language when discussing students of diverse backgrounds. In her study researching pre-service teachers' attitudes toward diversity, Bakari (2003) spoke of racial and ethnic diversity. In their study of pre-service teachers' awareness of diversity, Milner et al. (2003) referred to cultural and linguistic diversity. Most studies of teacher beliefs and diversity referred to cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity as well as social class (e.g., Burant & Kirby, 2002; Causey et al., 2000; McAllister & Irvine, 2002, Milner & Smithey, 2003). In these studies, the terms culture, race, and ethnicity were used interchangeably and were often undefined. Additionally, researchers have recognized that diversity can refer to family composition (Horm, 2003), gender (Gay, 2002; Ladson-

Billings, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004), sexual orientation (Horm 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Weinstein et al., 2004), religion (Milner & Smithey, 2003; Weinstein et al., 2004), politics (Gay, 2002), and ability/disability (Horm, 2003; Milner & Smithey, 2003).

I am defining diversity as differences in race, ethnic group, culture, language, or socioeconomic class. My decision to focus on these aspects of diversity was two-fold: (1) the College of Education in which the study participants were enrolled stated that they were committed to providing graduates with the "dispositions and skills needed to be highly qualified and effective teachers of students from racial, ethnic, linguistic, or socioeconomic groups currently underserved by the education system" (Teacher Education Committee, 2004); and (2) these were the aspects of diversity most often included by participants in my pilot study. However, as discussed in Chapter Three: Research Methodology, each pre-service teacher serving as a participant in this study provided her own definition of diversity. Some of these definitions were limited to only one aspect of diversity; other definitions included multiple aspects of diversity not included in my definition above.

Race

Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006) stated that race is "a social-political construct masquerading as biological fact" (p. 30). Banks and Banks (2003) also suggested that race "refers to the attempt by physical anthropologists to divide human groups according to their physical traits and characteristics" (p. 430). They pointed out the difficulties in these efforts "because human groups in modern societies are highly mixed physically. Consequently, different and often conflicting race typologies exist" (p. 430).

Ethnic Group

Gordon (1966), in Bennett (2004), defined an ethnic group as "a community of people within a larger society that is socially distinguished or set apart, by others or by itself, primarily on the basis of racial or cultural characteristics, such as religion, language, a shared history, and tradition" (p. 862). According to Banks (1994), this group can include "an involuntary collectivity of people with a shared feeling of common identity, a sense of peoplehood, and a shared sense of interdependence of fate" (p. 71).

Culture

Prior to the late 1950s, culture was often defined according to patterns of behavior and customs. However, current definitions of culture focus on knowledge and belief systems that are shared by a group of people (Bennett, 2007). Culture, as defined in this study, is "*the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior"* (Spradley, 1980, in Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004, p. 472, emphasis in original). They continue that this knowledge

> is often transmitted through language and includes knowledge about social roles and relationships, structures for communicating norms about what is appropriate to be communicated to whom and under what circumstances, and conceptions about the natural world and the individual's role in it. (Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2004, p. 472)

Language

According to The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (1997), language was defined as a "form or style of verbal expression" and "a system of signs and symbols and rules for using them that is used to carry information" (p. 419). Trueba (1993), as reported in Valenzuela (1999), discussed the importance of language in the following statement:

> Language is one of the most powerful human resources needed to maintain a sense of self-identity and self-fulfillment. Without a full command of one's own language, ethnic identity, the sharing of fundamental cultural values and norms,

> the social context of interpersonal communication that guides interactional understandings and the feeling of belonging within a group are not possible. (p. 169)

Socioeconomic Class

Knapp and Woolverton (2004) stated that socioeconomic class, also referred to as social class, was difficult to "disentangle…from other categorical social descriptors such as race, ethnicity, and gender; from culture…; and from ideology…" (p. 657). With this in mind, they asserted the following definition of socioeconomic class, or social class,

> [T]he social classes in a stratification system are distinguished in economic terms, with those individuals having the greatest wealth or access to resources typically occupying the "highest" classes...[S]ocial position is rarely fixed, except in the most rigid caste systems, because most social stratification systems permit mobility across class boundaries. (p. 658)

Beliefs

Researchers have argued that the examination of teachers' beliefs is essential to improving teacher education and should be the focus of educational research (Pajares, 1992). However, the complex nature of beliefs makes them difficult to understand, research, and document (Calderhead, 1996; Kagan, 1990; Pajares, 1992). In addition, the term belief has been so "steeped in mystery" (Pajares, 1992, p. 308) that researchers have struggled to develop a uniform or clear way to define it (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Kagan, 1990; Pajares, 1992). Adding to the difficult task of defining beliefs are the multiple terms that have been used interchangeably with it in research, including attitudes (Groulx, 2001); expectations (Weinstein, 1998); images (Calderhead & Robson, 1991); implicit theories (Schoonmaker & Ryan, 1996); knowledge (Alexander, Schallert & Hare, 1991); personal history-based lay theories (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991); preconceptions (Weinstein, 1989); and teachers' cognition (Kagan, 1990). For the purposes of this study, I have defined beliefs as,

> [covering] all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet which we are sufficiently confident of to act upon and also the matters that we now accept as certainly true, as knowledge, but nevertheless may be questioned in the future. (Dewey, 1933, p. 6)

I selected this definition based on Dewey's implication that beliefs may change or "be questioned in the future" (p. 6). In addition this definition supports research that suggested pre-service teachers often act upon practices they have observed without knowing the philosophy underlying the practice (Zanting, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2003). In Chapter Two: Review of the Literature, I have described the characteristics of teachers' educational beliefs and provided a framework for researching beliefs.

Multicultural Education

Researchers have yet to reach a consensus about the aims and boundaries of multicultural education (Banks, 2004), although they have worked to unify the field of multicultural education in terms of its aim and scope. Banks and Banks (2003) stated that multicultural education could be seen as

> an idea, an educational reform movement, [or] a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school. (p. 1)

When defined as an idea, "multicultural education is a set of beliefs and explanations that recognize and value the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping lifestyles; social experiences; personal identities; and educational opportunities of individuals, groups, and nations" (Gay, 2004, p. 33). As a reform movement, multicultural education "emphasizes revising the structural, procedural, substantive, and valuative components of the educational enterprise to reflect the social, cultural, ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity of the United States" (p. 33). When described as a process (rather than a

product), multicultural education is seen as "ways of thinking and behaving in educational settings that are pervasive and persistent" (pp. 33-34).

Nieto's (2000) definition of multicultural education has been called "the most inclusive and eclectic" (Gay, 2004, p. 34). For this reason, I have selected her definition of multicultural education. Nieto (2000) described multicultural education as anti-racist education; basic education; important for all students; pervasive; education for social justice; a process; and critical pedagogy (p. 305)**.** In Chapter Two: Review of the Literature, I have presented the approaches to multicultural education that provided the framework for analyzing the pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms.

Pre-service Teachers

Pre-service teachers are students enrolled in a university's teacher education program who are working toward teacher certification. The majority of pre-service teachers are undergraduate students in their junior and senior years of college, although there are exceptions including post-baccalaureate or graduate students pursuing teacher certification and individuals pursuing alternative routes to certification and licensure. In this study, 13 of the 15 participants were undergraduate students in their senior year of college; the remaining two participants were post-baccalaureate students pursuing teacher certification. These two participants completed the same three-semester teacher education program as the other 13 participants. This program will be described in more detail in Chapter Three: Research Methodology.

This study focused specifically on early childhood pre-service teachers in teaching in early childhood grades in public schools. I have provided a definition of early childhood education below.

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education has been defined as any program "that serves children from birth through age 8," including "child care centers, family child care homes, private and public pre-schools, kindergartens, and primary-grade schools" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 3). In public schools, early childhood education includes children from pre-kindergarten through the third grade.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

In NAEYC's 1997 publication of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), developmentally appropriate practices were defined as,

> the outcome of a process of teacher decisionmaking that draws on at least three critical, interrelated bodies of knowledge: (1) what teachers know about how children develop and learn; (2) what teachers know about the individual children in their group; and (3) knowledge of the social and cultural context in which those children live and learn. (p. vii)

CONCLUSION

In summary, the purpose of this study was to examine the beliefs of pre-service teachers in diverse early childhood classrooms. In addition, the study examined the experiences the pre-service teachers attributed to influencing and/or challenging their beliefs and practices. Chapter One has introduced the study and the purpose of the research. Chapter Two: Review of the Literature provides an overview of the literature framing the study: the beliefs of teachers and approaches to multicultural education. Chapter Three: Research Methodology describes the research design and methods of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. Specifically, the chapter presents the following: (a) research process, including epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods; (b) research context; (c) research participants; (d) data

collection; (e) data analysis; (f) quality in qualitative research; and (g) ethical considerations. From an analysis of interview, observational, and document data, several themes emerged around the participants' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms and the experiences that influenced and/or challenged these beliefs. These themes are presented in Chapter Four: Pre-service Teachers and Multicultural Education. Chapter Five: In the Classrooms of Pre-service Teachers details the themes that emerged based on an analysis of interview, observation, and document data collected during the second phase of the study. Chapter Six: Discussion and Implications, provides a discussion of the findings and implications for teacher education and research.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The literature from two bodies of research formed the framework for this study: the beliefs of teachers and multicultural education. The section on the beliefs of teachers: (a) describes the characteristics of teachers' educational beliefs; (b) discusses pre-service teachers and prior beliefs; (c) provides a framework for examining beliefs; and (d) reviews research on beliefs about diversity. The section on multicultural education describes approaches to multicultural education including: (a) curriculum reform; (b) equity pedagogy; (c) multicultural competence; and (d) societal equity.

THE BELIEFS OF TEACHERS

> Few would argue that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom, or that understanding the belief structures of teachers and teacher candidates is essential to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices.
>
> Pajares, 1992, p. 307

Teacher educators are faced with a unique challenge in preparing pre-service teachers for a career in education. The educators of other future professionals, such as law, medical, or accounting students, typically are not preparing students who have 12 or more years of experience and schooling in their fields of study (Trotman & Kerr, 2001). Through experiences and interactions with family members, community members, and educational institutions, pre-service teachers bring to their teacher education programs beliefs that have been socially constructed and that continue to influence "their professional evolution as teachers" (Williams, 1996, p. 163). Therefore, it is important to understand what beliefs pre-service teachers bring with them to their teacher education programs. Beliefs, as Pajares (1992) suggested in the quote above, have an influence on teachers' behavior in the classroom making research designed to better understand the

belief structures of teachers essential to improving the professional preparation pre-service teachers receive. In this section, I will: (a) describe the characteristics of teachers' educational beliefs; (b) discuss pre-service teachers and prior beliefs; (c) provide a framework for examining beliefs; and (d) review research on pre-service teachers' beliefs about diversity.

Characteristics of Teachers' Educational Beliefs

In his review of research, Pajares (1992) said the following about beliefs: (a) beliefs are well established; (b) beliefs are based on personal experience; (c) beliefs are a filter for future learning; and (d) beliefs are an influence on behavior. These statements about beliefs were used as a framework for describing the characteristics of teachers' educational beliefs.

Beliefs are Well-established

Pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs with well-established beliefs based on their experiences in schools. Lortie (1975) described the years spent in elementary and secondary school as the "apprenticeship of observation" (p. 61). According to Britzman (1991), pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs with over 13,000 hours observing teachers. Based on repeated observations of their teachers, many pre-service teachers believe they understand how to be teachers themselves. Over time, the pre-service teachers' observations are synthesized into cohesive belief systems (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991). However, based on their inexperience in analyzing or assessing the instruction of teachers, many pre-service teachers develop naïve ideas about what teachers do and how students learn (Lortie, 1975). This notion was supported in research conducted by Weinstein (1989) who found

that pre-service teachers overestimated their ability to teach. In addition, these pre-service teachers underestimated the challenges they would face once they entered the classroom.

Beliefs are Based on Personal Experience

Based on prior experiences with schools, pre-service teachers come to teacher education programs with theories of good practice (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991) that have developed "without the influence of instruction" (Holt-Reynolds, 1992, p. 326). Pre-service teachers often refer to their experiences as students when describing what they believe will or will not be successful in their future classrooms. Pre-service teachers in research by Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991) referred to their former teachers, to assignments they thought were effective learning tools, and to desirable (and undesirable) attributes of teachers when describing the teachers they believed they would become. Pre-service teachers provided similar explanations for what constituted good teaching in a study by Holt-Reynolds (1992). These pre-service teachers also referred to their own experiences as students when describing what good teachers should and should not do since they believed they could be generalized to all students.

Beliefs are a Filter for Future Learning

Pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs with pre-constructed beliefs based on experiences with teachers, schools, and learning that form screens through which the content of academic, theoretical, and practicum courses must pass and influence how these courses are interpreted into practice (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Raths, 2001; Trotman & Kerr, 2001). Though these pre-constructed beliefs do not singularly determine future teaching practices (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991), they do remain a major influence on practice after the pre-service teacher begins teaching in his or her own classroom (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Raths, 2001). In a study by

Holt-Reynolds (1992), pre-service teachers' prior experiences as students had resulted in "coherent, cohesive, and clearly grounded" (p. 338) beliefs against which the theories presented by a course instructor were tested rather than using the instructor's theories to test their beliefs. Similar results were found by Calderhead and Robson (1991). Their study found that pre-service teachers used their notions of good teaching to determine what course material was relevant and how they analyzed teaching practices.

Beliefs are an Influence on Behavior

Pre-service teachers base many classroom decisions on their own experiences as students, since they believe these experiences are prototypical (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991). Schooling experiences that are radically different from the personal experiences of pre-service teachers are not rejected, though they are not utilized when making decisions about classroom curriculum and practice. These notions are supported in empirical research. Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991) found that pre-service teachers referred to their prior experiences as students when describing how they identified and resolved disruptive behavior in the classroom. Similarly, Nespor (1987) suggested that teachers have beliefs based on prior experiences that influence the decisions made in the classroom. For example, Nespor described a mathematics teacher who emphasized highlighting the practical applications of mathematics based on his previous experience and work with the Job Corps.

Pre-service Teachers and Prior Beliefs

In a review of research on teachers' beliefs, Calderhead (1996) organized beliefs around the following categories: beliefs about learners and learning, beliefs about teaching, beliefs about subject, and beliefs about learning to teach. I used these categories in my review of research on pre-service teachers' prior beliefs.

Beliefs about Learners and Learning

The beliefs pre-service teachers hold about their students and how students learn influence their instruction and their interactions with students (Calderhead, 1996). Several studies have suggested that many pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs with beliefs that position learning as a passive activity, with students learning through the absorption of information from teacher-directed lessons (e.g., Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Hollingsworth, 1989; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Joram & Gabriele, 1998). However, these researchers have asserted that pre-service teachers' beliefs about student learning are susceptible to change. Following a fifth-year teacher education program that emphasized constructivist philosophy, the pre-service teachers in a study by Hollingsworth (1989) "expressed the belief that students should be responsible for their own learning and should actively construct it" (p. 170). Similar results were found by Florio-Ruane and Lensmire (1990), who found that pre-service teachers, after completing a course designed to transform their ideas about writing instruction, "embraced the idea that children were making sense" of content without and before receiving instruction (p. 287). This was in contrast to other beliefs, such as the role of the teacher and curriculum, which the pre-service teachers were unwilling to alter. This study is discussed further in the following section on research exploring pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching.

Beliefs about Teaching

Pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs with varying beliefs about the purpose of teaching and the role of the teacher in the classroom (Calderhead, 1996). In their review of research on characteristics of pre-service teachers, Brookhart and Freeman (1992) reported that most of the studies found pre-service teachers viewed "the nurturing and interpersonal aspects of a teacher's role as more important than the academic aspects" (p. 51). However, the results from other studies have contrasted this

finding. Nettle (1998) developed a questionnaire measuring pre-service teachers' beliefs about four dimensions of teaching thought to enhance student learning: "encouraging activity and independence in learning; motivating learning; establishing interpersonal relations conducive to learning; and structuring learning" (p. 194). Nettle found that most pre-service teachers selected structured, task oriented learning experiences over other dimensions.

Research suggests that for many pre-service teachers, teaching is a process of telling and transmitting knowledge to students (e.g., Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Hollingsworth, 1989; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Joram & Gabriele, 1998). In a study on pre-service teachers' beliefs about writing instruction, Florio-Ruane and Lensmire (1990) found that the pre-service teachers were unwilling to let go of their beliefs about the role of the teacher and curriculum, although they were willing to change their beliefs about how their students learn to write. The pre-service teachers continued to believe that in schools students receive information given to them by the teacher and later repeat this information back to the teacher as a way to assess learning. The researchers suggested this might be because the pre-service teachers entered the teacher education program with stronger beliefs about what teachers do than what children do, and therefore, were unwilling to alter these beliefs.

Beliefs about Subject

Depending on the subject area, there appears to be associated beliefs about "what the subject is about, what it means to know the subject or to be able to carry out tasks effectively within that subject domain" (Calderhead, 1996, p. 720). Holt-Reynolds (2000), in a study of prospective English teachers, found that while none of the participants "were clear about the teacher might do, what role she/he might serve during…discussions other than to ask for students' opinions and attempt to include all

class members" (p. 24), all of the participants favored class discussion as the primary teaching strategy for teaching literature. These findings were similar to the results of a study by Hollingsworth (1989), who found that pre-service teachers entering teacher education programs believed that teaching reading was a process of students absorbing information delivered by the teacher. However, after completing the teacher education program, these pre-service teachers had changed their beliefs that teaching reading involved students being allowed to actively construct meaning and learning.

Anderson, Smith, and Peasley (2000) explored the beliefs of three pre-service teachers pursuing an elementary certification with an emphasis in science. Two of the pre-service teachers in this study valued students becoming engaged in inquiry and developing an interest in science over the learning of science content. The third pre-service teacher believed that it was important for students to learn about science through the delivery of "good presentations" by the teacher. At the end of the study, the pre-service teachers believed it was important to find a balance between actively involving students in hands-on science lessons while ensuring the students were also understanding the content of the lesson.

In a study exploring pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching mathematics, Stuart and Thurlow (2000) found pre-service teachers initially believed mathematics consisted of solving problems quickly and algorithmically, getting the correct answer, and receiving information passively from the teacher. By reflecting on their mathematical autobiographies and developing a vision of their future classrooms, the pre-service teachers in this study reported a commitment and "a need to ensure that they not pass on counterproductive beliefs to students" (p. 118), including the prior beliefs they held at the beginning of the study.

Beliefs about Learning to Teach

Pre-service teachers have beliefs about professional development and how individuals learn to be teachers (Calderhead, 1996). Researchers have found that teachers, both in-service and pre-service, believe that teachers learn from experience in the classroom (Calderhead, 1988) and from observations of other teachers (Calderhead, 1988; Lortie, 1975). Similarly, Book, Byers, and Freeman (1983) found that pre-service teachers valued classroom experience and emphasized what they learned from their experiences as student teachers. There is support from other research that pre-service teachers' beliefs about learning to teach influence the components of teacher education programs to which they emphasize as being the most important (Calderhead & Robson, 1991). For example, a pre-service teacher who viewed the process of learning to teach as personal growth believed that she did not learn from her university coursework and argued learning to teach involved classroom experience. This was in contrast to another pre-service teacher in the study who felt confident in her ability to teach and emphasized the importance of gaining new ideas about teaching and instructional strategies from her university coursework that she could apply to her practice.

Framework for Examining Beliefs

Researchers have argued that the examination of teachers' beliefs is essential to improving teacher education and should be the focus of educational research (Pajares, 1992). According to Pintrich (1990), in Pajares (1992), "beliefs ultimately will prove the most valuable psychological construct to teacher education" (p. 308). If teacher educators want to understand teaching from the perspective of teachers, they need to understand the beliefs that define teachers' work (Nespor, 1987). However, the complex nature of beliefs makes them difficult to understand, research, and document (Calderhead, 1996; Kagan, 1990; Pajares, 1992).

Grounded in theory and field-based research, Nespor (1987) developed "a theoretically-grounded model of 'belief systems' that can serve as a framework for systematic and comparative investigations" (p. 317). The purpose of providing a framework for systematically comparing investigations of beliefs made it an appropriate choice for examining the beliefs and practices of pre-service teachers in culturally diverse early childhood classrooms. The four characteristics of beliefs identified by Nespor are: existential presumption, alternativity, affective and evaluative loading, and episodic structure.

Existential Presumption

Beliefs often include existential presumptions, or "propositions or assumptions about the existence or nonexistence of entities" (Nespor, 1987, p. 318). In other words, a teacher may believe something is real even when it is not. An illustration of existential presumption provided by Nespor was a teacher who attributes success in mathematics to maturity, who therefore believed s/he could not force students to learn mathematics since maturation cannot be forced.

Alternativity

Beliefs also contain "conceptualizations of ideal situations [that differ] significantly from present realities" (Nespor, 1987, p. 319) that "serve as means of defining goals and tasks" (p. 319), which Nespor called alternativity. Many of the teachers studied by Nespor attempted to create classroom environments that were different than the classrooms they had experienced as children. An example of alternativity presented by Nespor was a teacher who wished to provide her students with experiences that were in contrast to the "mortifying experiences" she had experienced as a student.

Affective and Evaluative Loading

The affective and evaluative aspects of beliefs are "important regulators of the amount of energy teachers will put into activities and how they will expend energy on an activity" (Nespor, 1987, p. 320). Therefore in teaching, a teacher's knowledge of a content area can be separated from his or her preferences toward that content area. These preferences also influence how the content is taught. An example of affective and evaluative loading given by Nespor were history teachers who did not believe the presentation of detailed facts should be a focus of their courses since these facts would be soon forgotten by their students. Instead, these teachers focused on skills they felt were more practical, such as outlining text and organizing notes.

Episodic Structure

The episodic structure of beliefs refers to the idea that beliefs are "derived from personal experience or from cultural or institutional sources of knowledge transmission" (Nespor, 1987, p. 320). The "power, authority, and legitimacy" of these experiences "frame the comprehension of events later in time" (p. 320). Nespor attributed the power of these personal experiences to "the fact that teachers learn a lot about teaching through their experiences as students" (p. 320). For example, a mathematics teachers' emphasis on highlighting the practical applications of mathematics was based on students' responses to his previous experiences and work with the Job Corps.

Pre-service Teachers' Beliefs about Diversity

In addition to the prior beliefs described above, pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs with beliefs based on experiences with diverse populations that have influenced their "ways of thinking about teaching learners who are diverse" (Milner & Smithey, 2003, p. 294). However, pre-service teachers are often hesitant to participate in

discussions about diversity, inequity, and stereotypes (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Horm, 2003). For pre-service teachers with little cross-cultural knowledge or experience, they often bring to their teacher education programs attitudes and beliefs that will negatively impact the diverse students they teach (Horm, 2003; Sleeter, 2001; Townsend, 2002).

Impact of Beliefs on Students

Research has shown the pre-service teachers who hold negative attitudes about the diverse students they teach often have lower expectations for these students. Pre-service teachers in a study by Artiles et al. (1995) admitted they held different expectations for the culturally diverse students in their class and therefore, taught them differently. For example, they made use of more "drill and kill" activities in mathematics, reading, and phonics when teaching culturally diverse students.

Many pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs viewing cultural differences as deficiencies rather than strengths or resources for them to build upon in the classroom (Horm, 2003). Another belief that negatively impacts diverse students is placing the blame for successes or failures in the classroom on the children and their families. In a study by Artiles et al. (1995), pre-service teachers attributed students' failure to their lack of effort and their home backgrounds, with one pre-service teacher claiming that because of social expectations, no matter how hard the culturally diverse students in her classroom try, they would still fail. The use of labels such as "culturally disadvantaged" and "at-risk" result in many students of a racial or ethnic minority "to the assignment to groups for children with mental retardation, emotional disturbances, learning disabilities, and those in need of similar remedial educational strategies" (Bakari, 2003, p. 644). These negative beliefs have driven researchers to examine ways to challenge the pre-service teachers' prior beliefs about teaching diverse students.

Challenging Beliefs

Researchers and teacher educators have explored various ways to challenge pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching diverse students. This has included coursework dedicated to cultural diversity (Artiles et al., 1995; Clark & Medina, 2000; Conle et al., 2000; Dee & Henkin, 2002; Lea, 2004; McDiarmid & Price, 1990; McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001; Middleton, 2002; Milner, 2006; Milner & Smithey, 2003; Santoro & Allard, 2005); field placements in culturally diverse neighborhoods (Burant & Kirby, 2002; Causey et al., 2000; Gillette, 1996; Hyland & Noffke, 2005; Seidl & Friend, 2002; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006); assignments focusing on a particular aspect of diversity or asking pre-service teachers to engage with diversity in a variety of ways (Boyle-Baise, 2005; Brindley & Laframboise, 2002; Pewewardy, 2005; Schoorman, 2002); and cohorts dedicated to preparing pre-service teachers to teach in culturally diverse urban settings (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

One way researchers have challenged pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms was through the development of university coursework. For example, Clark and Medina (2000) conducted a qualitative study of secondary pre-service teachers using literacy narratives. Through the analysis of data, including electronic conversations, group discussions, reading logs, interviews, and selected course work, they found that the literacy narratives supported the pre-service teachers' critical understandings of multiculturalism and challenged their stereotypes.

In a study by McFalls & Cobb-Roberts (2001), pre-service teachers enrolled in a diversity education course that introduced cognitive dissonance theory were compared with pre-service teachers who did not receive this instruction in their section of the diversity education course. The researchers found that by teaching cognitive dissonance

theory the pre-service teachers developed an awareness of dissonance that may possible reduce their resistance to diversity issues in the classroom or in other courses.

Other courses focused on the pre-service teachers exploring their own identities. Lea (2004) explored the use of a cultural portfolio she used with her pre-service teachers to help them reflect on the public cultural scripts that influence their practice. The pre-service teachers who completed the cultural portfolio selected six "socially constructed categories of interlocking, ideological experience that may contribute to whiteness" (p. 121); wrote stories of the cultural scripts they selected and the influence of these scripts on their teaching practice; and revisited these stories after receiving feedback from both peers and the instructor. For the pre-service teachers who brought a commitment to becoming critical multicultural educators to the cultural portfolio assignment, they were able to reflect on "whether what they think, feel, and do translates into culturally responsive practice in the classroom" (p. 125). Other pre-service teachers experienced "severe culture shock" (p. 125) and resisted the feedback and suggestions of their peers and the instructor.

Santoro and Allard (2005) examined the understandings a group of pre-service teachers had of their own ethnic and socio-economic class identities and their work with students from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Data were collected through focus groups, reflective journals (kept by the participants), field notes, and interviews. While each of the pre-service teachers understood the importance of meeting the needs of their students through curriculum and pedagogy, some of the pre-service teachers employed a discourse assimilation by emphasizing the mainstream curriculum; some recognized the lack of relevance the curriculum provided to their students, but were unable to make change to this curriculum; and others were able to modify the curriculum to include resources that were culturally appropriate for their students.

By placing pre-service teachers in community rather than classroom settings, researchers hope that they will be better able to understand the daily lives of the students they teach. Horm (2003) stated field based experiences can increase awareness and sensitivity to the cultural and familial contexts of students outside the school and classroom. Experiences in the community "can help students to see the strengths that reside in a culture" (p. 209) and can assist pre-service teachers in viewing their students as having strengths rather than just having needs (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Using qualitative methodology, Burant and Kirby (2002) examined pre-service teachers' experiences in a semester-long community-based field placement in an urban school. Pre-service teachers had the opportunity to become involved in activities, such as working with students to develop and publish a school/community newsletter, hosting parent and principal coffee talks, leading book and breakfast clubs, and assembling and delivering food baskets. Through an analysis of this data, the researchers developed categories that described the experiences of the participants. Some pre-service teachers experienced deepening beliefs and commitments to multicultural education, positive shifts in beliefs about teaching in urban schools, and a commitment to learning about the communities in which they teach; others continued to express an interest in teaching White middle-class children and maintained beliefs that were counter to course goals.

Causey et al. (2000) used qualitative case studies to explore the impact of a course and an internship in an urban school on pre-service teachers' attitudes and beliefs about diversity. In the course, pre-service teachers developed an action plan, including visits to community churches, synagogues, and museums, to increase their knowledge about and experiences with diversity. After participating in a three-week internship in an urban school, the pre-service teachers returned to the course setting for debriefing and reflection. Similar to the results in the study by Burant and Kirby (2002), the pre-service

teachers' reactions to the course and internship were varied. These reactions included pre-service teachers who were surprised with their comfort in being the minority in the internship setting, pre-service teachers who did not find differences between these culturally diverse students and any other students, pre-service teachers who became aware of the relationship of culture and teaching, and pre-service teachers who experienced conflict over an awareness of being involved with but not a part of the culture of the urban school.

Gillette (1996) studied the experiences of seven pre-service teachers completing a two-month student teaching session at a predominantly African-American elementary school. Data sources included observations, official university evaluation forms, and informal interviews with the children, student teachers, cooperating teachers, and the college supervisor. Gillette found the participants' experiences could be described as a resister, a rethinker, or toward a culturally relevant teacher. The resisters entered their student teaching with beliefs that reflected a deficiency orientation about the students and their families and held on to these beliefs during the student teaching experience. The rethinkers also entered student teaching with a deficiency orientation toward the students and their families, but modified these beliefs "based on information that contradicted their views, constructive critique of their work, and support for changing their actions" (p. 117). The student teacher Gillette called toward a culturally relevant teacher "entered the student teaching semester with a 'culture-rich' orientation toward the children and their parents" (p. 122) and deepened this orientation throughout the semester.

Researchers have also used a variety of experiences designed to challenge pre-service teachers' beliefs. For example, the pre-service teachers in a study Boyle-Baise (2005) participated in a service-learning project that sought to reconstruct the history of a segregated school that served African-American youth. The participants in this study,

who were all pre-service teachers of color, wrote three reflective essays about their experiences about their service-learning and field-based project. Interviews, which were conducted in small groups, also served as data in this study. Boyle-Baise found that several of the pre-service teachers felt disconnected from the community, though they attended college there, and wondered how the work they were doing connected to them. Others developed a sense of pride and connection to the community through the service-learning project. Through the service-learning project, the pre-service teachers were able to define terms such as culturally responsive teaching and funds of knowledge more clearly than they were before the project began. Most of the pre-service teachers developed a community orientation to teaching and left the project committed to exploring the assets of the communities in which they would teach.

Brindley and Laframboise (2002) used children's literature, drama, and reflective writing as a way for pre-service teachers to explore multiple perspectives. Themes that emerged from the data were an increased reflection and sensitivity, discomfort with self-examination, an awareness of the importance of multiple perspectives. Pewewardy (2005) used interactive journaling with pre-service teachers as a way to engage them into multicultural education discourse. The pre-service teachers in his study were paired with another pre-service teacher from a different cultural and linguistic background. The partners exchanged journals throughout the semester and responded to each other's entries and questions in response to the instructor's lectures and questions. Over the seven years Pewewardy used this assignment with students in his multicultural education course, he has found that the pre-service teachers were more willing to share their personal beliefs in the journals than they were in class discussions; some pre-service teachers felt as though they are being attacked by "politically correct minorities" (p. 50) and "actively accept the dominant ideology" (p. 50) that suppresses minorities; and the

assignment helped the pre-service teachers become more aware of their beliefs and identities.

Finally, the pre-service teachers in a study by Schoorman (2002) corresponded by electronic mail with children from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. The researcher hoped the correspondence would offer the pre-service teachers "a more personalized means for learning about culturally different experiences" and "a less threatening environment in which to examine their own biases and privilege" (p. 357). Schoorman found that the pre-service teachers developed a greater awareness of bilingualism and "questioned the validity of assessments conducted in the students' second language" (p. 361); identified their own biases; recognized "that their pen pals were smart" (p. 361); became critically reflective of their own beliefs and responses with their pen pals; and moved many of the pre-service teachers to action in making positive changes for the school and community of the students with whom they corresponded.

While many of the pre-service teachers in the aforementioned studies experienced positive shifts in their beliefs about teaching in diverse classroom settings, researchers caution against the use of "stand-alone" courses on diversity (Ladson-Billings, 2000: Sleeter, 2001). Instead they recommend that multicultural education and discussions in teaching in culturally diverse schools be embedded throughout the teacher education program. One example of a cohort that was designed to prepare pre-service teachers to teach in culturally diverse urban schools was the Teach for Diversity Project, which was the focus of Ladson-Billings' (2001) book *Crossing Over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms*. The Teach for Diversity cohort was an elementary certification and master's degree program "designed to prepare teachers to teach effectively in multicultural, social-reconstructionist ways" (p. 31). The pre-service teachers in the Teach for Diversity cohort were selected based on their interest in and

commitment to equity, social justice, and child-centered pedagogy. The two-year cohort included seminars and coursework on teaching and diversity, elementary methods courses; practicums and student teaching in the same elementary school located in a working-class community; and an action research project. Ladson-Billings reported the cohort members' efforts to focus on academic achievement, develop cultural competence, and develop a socio-political consciousness – all components of culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995).

Summary

The literature presented in The Beliefs of Teachers provides the first body of research forming the framework for this study. In this section, I have described the characteristics of teachers' educational beliefs as being well-established (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Lortie, 1975; Pajares, 1992; Weinstein, 1989), based on prior experiences (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Pajares, 1992), a filter for future learning (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Pajares, 1992; Raths, 2001; Trotman & Kerr, 2001), and an influence on behavior (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). In addition, I have provided a model of belief systems developed by Nespor (1987) that I used in this study for investigating pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. Although the complex nature of beliefs makes them difficult to understand, research, and document (Calderhead, 1996; Kagan, 1990; Pajares, 1992), the examination of teachers' beliefs is essential to improving teacher education (Pajares, 1992). Considering that pre-service teachers often bring to their teacher education programs negative attitudes and beliefs that impact the diverse students they teach (Horm, 2003; Sleeter, 2001; Townsend, 2002), an increased understanding of pre-service teachers' beliefs about diversity will allow teacher educators to design coursework and

field placements that will better prepare their graduates to enter classrooms with the dispositions and skills needed to teach in diverse schools.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

> If multicultural education is to become better understood and implemented in ways more consistent with theory, its various dimensions must be more clearly described, conceptualized, and researched.
>
> Banks, 2004, p. 4

As suggested in the quote above by Banks (2004), multicultural education is a field characterized by multiple dimensions that must be more clearly understood by educators for theory to be implemented into practice. Before reviewing the approaches to multicultural education framing this study, it is important to understand the history of the field. Providing a historical overview of multicultural education is necessary "for understanding the contemporary developments and discourse in multicultural education and [for restructuring] schools, colleges, and universities to reflect multicultural issues and concerns" (Banks, 2004, p. 7). Multicultural education has been linked to African-American scholarship in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In addition, there are indirect connections to intercultural education, which was a research and curriculum reform movement of the 1930s (Banks, 2003). Contemporary multicultural education emerged as a result of the fervor of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. During the civil rights movement, African Americans' pursuit for the elimination of "discrimination in public accommodations, housing, employment, and education" (Banks, 2003, p. 5) had great consequences on educational institutions in the United States. In addition to ethnic groups, other marginalized groups, including women, senior citizens, gay rights advocates, and individuals with disabilities, joined the civil rights movement in the 1960s and early 1970s. Initially, this resulted in the addition of holidays and celebrations of

individual ethnic groups to school curriculum, typically as course electives (Banks, 2003).

According to Banks (2004), the development of multicultural education has consisted of four stages. Multicultural education first emerged in response to educators with particular interests in the history and culture of ethnic minority groups, as described above. These educators wanted to blend ethnic studies with school and teacher-education curricula. When these educators realized that adding ethnic studies to the school and teacher-education curricula was not enough to bring about school reform, the second phase of multicultural education surfaced. This second phase, multiethnic education, had as its goal to increase educational equality by making systemic changes to the structure of schools. The third phase of multicultural education involved the inclusion of women and people with disabilities, as well as additional groups who felt schools and society had victimized them. These groups sought the inclusion of "their histories, cultures, and voices into the curricula and structure of schools, colleges, and universities" (p. 13). The final and current phase of multicultural education is committed to the development of theory, research, and practice that connect variables such as race, class, and gender. Banks (2004) points out that while the third and fourth phases are more prevalent in current theory and research, each of these phases is present today in theory, research, and practice. Indeed, in practice, multicultural education has been used "to describe a wide variety of programs and practices related to educational equity, women, ethnic groups, language minorities, low-income groups, and people with disabilities" (Banks, 2003, p. 6). As a result, multicultural education may be limited to curriculum focusing on the educational equity of one of these groups, several of these groups, or total school reform effort designed to increase educational equity for all of the marginalized groups mentioned above.

As suggested in the historical overview of multicultural education, researchers in multicultural education have worked to unify the field in aim and scope. However, a variety of typologies, frameworks, and approaches exist today pointing to the realization that a consensus about the aims and boundaries of multicultural education has not yet been reached (Banks, 2004). Based on an analysis of research on multicultural education spanning the last three decades, Bennett (2001) offered a conceptual framework of 12 research genres that help to organize the complex and multidisciplinary roots of multicultural education. The research genres were organized into four clusters: (a) curriculum reform; (b) equity pedagogy; (c) multicultural competence; and (d) societal equity. I have used Bennett's clusters to organize my review of approaches to multicultural education.

Curriculum Reform

Curriculum reform is based on two premises: 1) that knowledge is constructed and 2) that "a Eurocentric curriculum in the United States is a tool of cultural racism" (Bennett, 2001, p. 172). Therefore, multicultural education research within this cluster focuses on the transformation of traditional Eurocentric curriculum. This includes the research genres of historical inquiry in the content areas, bias presented in curriculum materials and texts, and curriculum theory. In Banks's (2004) analysis of curricular reform models, he identified four approaches: contributions approach, where the focus is on holidays, cultural practices, and cultural heroes without altering the curriculum; additive approach, where voices, concepts, and content is added as a way to enrich the existing curriculum; transformative approach, where the curriculum is altered to allow the inclusion of multiple perspectives, issues, and concepts; and social action approach, where students work together to solve problems and make change in their communities.

Within the cluster of curriculum reform I focused on the final genre, curriculum theory, because of its emphasis on "curriculum goals, rationales, models, and designs" (Bennett, 2001, p. 180). Two approaches to multicultural education included in this genre are Banks' (1993) five types of knowledge and Sleeter and Grant's (1994) five approaches to race, class, and gender.

Five Types of Knowledge

James Banks (1993) developed a framework on types of knowledge in response to the debate over what knowledge and whose knowledge should be taught in schools. He hoped this typology would "help practicing educators and researchers identify types of knowledge that reflect particular values, assumptions, perspectives, and ideological positions" (p. 5). The types of knowledge taught and valued in schools "have important implications for planning and teaching a multicultural curriculum" (p. 11). In addition, as a part of multicultural education, teachers need to help students understand the construction of knowledge and provide students opportunities to understand the ways in which knowledge is influenced by personal assumptions and experiences. The five types of knowledge in Banks' typology were: personal/cultural knowledge, popular knowledge, mainstream academic knowledge, transformative academic knowledge, and school knowledge.

Personal and cultural knowledge. The first type of knowledge, personal and cultural knowledge, was defined as "the concepts, explanations, and interpretations that students derive from personal experiences in their homes, families, and community cultures" (Banks, 1993, p. 6). From these experiences, students develop beliefs that are used as screens through which knowledge and experiences in schools are viewed and interpreted. This type of knowledge can be problematic for students when their personal and cultural knowledge conflicts with school knowledge in terms of group interactions,

rules for engaging in conversation, communication styles, and perspectives on various events in the history of the United States. Teachers are faced with the challenge of using their students' personal and cultural knowledge in effective ways while helping their students learn school knowledge, a type of knowledge described below.

Popular knowledge. This type of knowledge "consists of the facts, interpretations, and beliefs that are institutionalized within television, movies, videos, records, and other forms of the mass media" (Banks, 1993, p. 8). Included in popular knowledge are the following tenets:

> (a) The United States is a powerful nation with unlimited opportunities for individuals who are willing to take advantage of them. (b) To succeed in the United States, an individual only has to work hard. You can realize your dreams in the United States if you are willing to work hard and pull yourself up by the bootstrap. (c) As a land of opportunity for all, the United States is a highly cohesive nation, whose ideals of equality and freedom are shared by all. (p. 8)

These tenets are embedded in American popular culture and are conveyed through the forms of the mass media described above.

Mainstream academic knowledge. The third type of knowledge described by Banks (1993), mainstream academic knowledge, "consists of the concepts, paradigms, theories, and explanations that constitute traditional and established knowledge in the behavioral and social sciences" (p. 8). Underlying this type of knowledge is the belief that there is an objective truth or truths that can be confirmed through research. It is this type of knowledge that constitutes the core of most school and university curricula. Mainstream academic knowledge is not static and challenges to this type of knowledge results in "changes, reinterpretations, debates, disagreements and ultimately to paradigm shifts, new theories, and interpretations" (p. 9). Most of these challenges stem from the transformative academic community.

Transformative academic knowledge. The fourth type of knowledge "consists of concepts, paradigms, themes, and explanations that challenge mainstream academic knowledge and that expand the historical and literary canon" (Banks, 1993, p. 9). Transformative academic knowledge is based on the postmodern epistemology of subjectivism. Postmodern researchers believe "that knowledge is not neutral but is influenced by human interests, that all knowledge reflects the power and social relationships within society, and that an important purpose of knowledge construction is to help people improve society" (p. 9). Scholarship that has reconceptualized historical events is an example of transformative academic knowledge.

School knowledge. The final type of knowledge, school knowledge, "consists of the facts, concepts, and generalizations presented in textbooks, teachers' guides, and the other forms of media designed for school use" (Banks, 1993, p. 11). In addition, the individual teacher's interpretation of the knowledge presented in textbooks is included in school knowledge. School knowledge and the supporting curriculum, primarily textbooks, encourages students to memorize isolated ideas that "reinforce the dominant social, economic, and power arrangements within society" (p. 11) and are discouraged from questioning these ideas.

Five Approaches to Race, Class, and Gender

The framework proposed by Sleeter and Grant (1994) focused on race, language, social class, gender, disability, and sexual orientation as encompassing diversity. This framework was based on an analysis of books and articles published about kindergarten through twelfth grade schools in the United States that included the descriptors multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial, bicultural, biracial, or ethnic education (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). The five approaches comprising this typology are teaching the exceptional

and the culturally different, human relations, single-group studies, multicultural education, and education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist.

Teaching the exceptional and culturally different. Teachers who advocate teaching the exceptional and culturally different believe in helping those who are "different" assimilate to standards of American culture, normalcy, knowledge, values, and skills. A theme of "bridging the gap" runs throughout this approach. The students regarded as exceptional and culturally different are typically from lower socio-economic backgrounds and racial minorities, have limited English proficiency, receive special education services, or are perceived as behind in their academic achievement. Teachers who advocate this approach build on students' experiences, backgrounds, interests, and learning styles to help fill gaps in knowledge and help students catch up.

Human relations. Teachers advocating a human relations approach promote "positive feelings among students…in a society composed of different people" (Sleeter & Grant, 1994, p. 85). A theme of "I'm okay. You're okay" runs throughout this approach. The emphasis in this approach is on stereotypes, name calling, and cooperative learning activities and projects. By studying different groups, teachers hope to promote acceptance, unity, tolerance, and respect. Cultural differences are emphasized only to improve feelings toward one's self and others.

Single-group studies. A third approach in Sleeter and Grant's (1994) typology is single-group studies. Advocates of this approach study one cultural group at a time, such as African-American studies, Latin-American studies, Asian-American studies, and women's studies, emphasizing how the group has been discriminated against, current issues facing the group, and encourage students to think critically about the need for change for the identified group. Teachers utilizing this approach in their classroom create displays featuring the culture and invite speakers who are members of the group being

studied to participate in class activities. Teachers encourage students to analyze, evaluate, develop a critical conscious about their own culture, and take action on behalf of others.

Multicultural education. The fourth approach Sleeter and Grant (1994) call multicultural education. This approach is based on equality in social structure and cultural pluralism. Teachers advocating this approach promote strengths in cultural diversity, human rights and respect, alternative life choices, social justice and equal opportunity, and equity in the distribution of power. In their classrooms, teachers utilize cooperative learning and encourage students to actively and critically analyze issues of power.

Education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist. Sleeter and Grant (1994) advocate for the implementation of their fifth approach: education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist. This approach "directly challenges students to become social reformers and commit to the reconstruction of society through the redistribution of power and other resources" (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001). Similar to the multicultural education approach, students critically analyze issues of power and oppression. However, in this approach the goal is to empower students to take action toward a more democratic society.

Equity Pedagogy

The underlying assumptions of equity pedagogy are all children have the ability to learn and the function of school is to ensure all children reach their potential. Research in this cluster seeks "to transform the total school environment, especially the hidden curriculum that is expressed in teachers' attitudes and expectations for student learning, grouping of students and instructional strategies, school disciplinary policies and practices, school and community relations, and classroom climates" (Bennett, 2001, p.

183). Two examples of equity pedagogy are culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000, 2002).

Culturally Relevant Teaching

Ladson-Billings (1994a) outlined the elements of culturally relevant teaching found in the practices of successful teachers of African American children. These elements are categorized around three themes: conceptions of self and others, social relations, and conceptions of knowledge. In a later article, Ladson-Billings (1995) described culturally relevant teaching as ensuring that students experience academic success, develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and develop a critical consciousness.

Conceptions of self and others. Teachers with culturally relevant practices have high self-esteem, a high regard for others, and see teaching as an art. These teachers view themselves as part of the community, strive to give back to the community, and encourage their students to do the same. Culturally relevant teachers help their students make connections between multiple identities: community, national, and global. They believe in the success of all students and believe "students come to school with knowledge and that…knowledge must be explored and utilized in order for students to become achievers" (Ladson-Billings, 1994a, p. 52).

Social relations. Teachers with culturally relevant practices demonstrate a connectedness to all students. The relationship between these teachers and their students is fluid and extends beyond the boundaries of the classroom. These teachers encourage a community of learners. This classroom community includes caring about individual achievement as well as the achievement of others. Students are encouraged to learn through collaboration and are expected to teach and take responsibility for each other.

Conceptions of knowledge. Teachers with culturally relevant practices are passionate about learning, knowledge, and content. They believe knowledge is "continuously re-created, recycled, and shared by teachers and students" (Ladson-Billings, 1994a, p. 81). Culturally relevant teachers view knowledge critically and encourage students to question whose truth is being presented in textbooks, literature, and in the media. They help students develop the skills necessary for full participation in the construction of knowledge. Teachers with culturally relevant practices consider student diversity and individual differences when thinking about the achievement of their students and their understanding of excellence.

Academic success. For students to become active members of society, they must develop "literacy, numeracy, technological, social, and political skills" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160). Culturally relevant teachers work to ensure that their students learn these skills in ways that are meaningful to them. Ladson-Billings believed "the trick of culturally relevant teaching" was encouraging all students to "choose academic excellence" (p. 160).

Cultural competence. In addition to achieving academically, culturally relevant teachers ensure their students develop and/or maintain cultural competence. Culturally relevant teachers do this by using their students' culture as a tool for learning, involving parents in the classroom, and encouraging students to use their home language while learning standard English (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Through these practices, culturally relevant teachers show their students that who they are and where they come from are valued and recognized in the classroom.

Critical consciousness. Finally, culturally relevant teachers help students "develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the social norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (Ladson-

Billings, 1995, p. 162). An example of how culturally relevant teachers can encourage students to develop a critical consciousness is by critiquing textbooks, discussing the inequitable distribution of funds to middle-class schools versus lower-class schools, and brainstorming ways to solve community problems.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

In her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching; Theory, Research, and Practice*, Geneva Gay (2000) outlined the knowledge, attitudes, and skills teachers need to improve the success of culturally diverse students. As an approach to multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching was developed through research, theory, and experience working with African-American, Asian, Latino, and Native American students. She described culturally responsive teaching as being:

1. Validating – "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students in make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 29);

2. Comprehensive – teaching the whole child by "helping students of color maintain identity and connections with their ethnic groups and communities; develop a sense of community, camaraderie, and shared responsibility; and acquire an ethic of success" (p. 30);

3. Multidimensional – incorporating "curriculum content, learning context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instructional techniques, and performance assessments" (p. 31);

4. Empowering – helping students "to believe they can succeed in learning tasks and be willing to pursue success relentlessly until mastery is obtained" (p. 32);

5. Transformative – defying traditional educational practices by being "explicit about respecting the cultures and experiences of African American, Native American, Latino, and Asian American students, and it uses these as worthwhile resources for teaching and learning" (p. 33); and

6. Emancipatory – liberating for students "in that it releases the intellect of students of color from the constraining manacles of mainstream canons of knowledge and ways of knowing" (p. 35).

In addition, she asserted that culturally responsive teaching includes four essential elements: cultural caring in a learning community, cross-cultural communications, culturally relevant curricula, and cultural congruity in classroom instruction. In a later article, Gay (2002) discussed the importance of teachers developing a cultural diversity knowledge base.

Cultural caring in the learning community. Culturally responsive teachers have high expectations for all students. This cultural caring places "teachers in an ethical, emotional, and academic partnership with ethnically diverse students, a partnership that is anchored in respect, honor, integrity, resource sharing, and a deep belief in the possibility of transcendence" (Gay, 2000, p. 52). The building of a learning community is another important component of culturally responsive teaching. The emphasis should be on all members of the community being responsible for helping each other succeed and ensuring that all members make contributions to the learning of the community. In addition, culturally responsive teachers should teach "personal, moral, social, political, [and] cultural" knowledge and skills in conjunction with academic knowledge and skills (Gay, 2002, p. 110). In addition, culturally responsive teachers should emphasize the implications knowledge has on morals and politics, which she hopes would compel students to become involved in social action seeking equality and justice.

Cross-cultural communications. Understanding the linguistic codes of culturally diverse students is necessary in enabling culturally responsive teachers to better understand their students' abilities and needs. Gay (2002) argues that culturally responsive teachers should understand how communication styles of different cultural groups reflect values and shape learning. Through this understanding, teachers know how to modify classroom interactions to reflect the communication styles and patterns of their students. According to this strand, culturally responsive teachers should understand the

cultural differences of "discourse features, logic and rhythm, delivery, vocabulary usage, role relationships of speakers and listeners, intonation, gestures, and body movements" (p. 111).

Culturally relevant curricula. Culturally responsive teachers need to learn how to design culturally responsive curricula and instructional strategies (Gay, 2000). Culturally responsive curricula include formal plans for instruction, symbolic curriculum, and societal curriculum; each offering different opportunities for addressing cultural diversity in the classroom. As part of the formal plans for instruction, cultural responsive teachers should determine the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional materials adopted by the school district and state. Teachers should look for the accuracy, placement, quantity, and overall quality of attention to diversity, racism, and hegemony. The symbolic curriculum includes "images, symbols, icons, mottoes, awards, celebrations, and other artifacts that are used to teach students knowledge, skills, morals, and values" (Gay, 2002, p. 108). Culturally responsive teachers ensure that "the images displayed in classrooms represent a wide variety of age, gender, time, place, social class, and positional diversity within and across ethnic groups" (pp. 108-109). The final type of curriculum is the society curriculum, which is "the knowledge, ideas, and impressions about ethnic groups that are portrayed in the mass media" (p. 109). Culturally responsive teachers are aware of the negative, stereotypical, and inaccurate portrayal of different ethnic groups in the media, resist these images reported through the societal curriculum, and work against their power.

Cultural congruity in classroom instruction. In this element of culturally responsive teaching, Gay described the instructional strategies used with culturally diverse students. Cooperative learning and peer collaboration and teaching are aligned with the "communal cultural systems of African, Asian, Native and Latino American

groups" (Gay, 2002, p. 112). Other instructional strategies described by Gay include movement, music, drama, and frequently changing the format of tasks and instruction. Culturally responsive teachers should be aware of learning styles, which have specific patterns for different ethnic groups. These patterns include

> …preferred content; ways of working through learning tasks; techniques for organizing and conveying ideas and thoughts; physical and social settings for task performance; structural arrangements of work, study, and performance space; perceptual stimulation for receiving, processing, and demonstrating comprehension and competence; motivations, incentives, and rewards for learning; and interpersonal interactional styles. (p. 113)

Gay also highlights the incorporation of culturally relevant examples in the teaching of content areas. This could include ethnic literature when teaching various skills in reading, or ethnic fabric or recipes when teaching mathematics.

Cultural diversity knowledge base. Gay (2002) argued that teachers should have explicit knowledge about cultural diversity to meet the academic needs of culturally diverse children. Components of culture that Gay believed teachers should have knowledge of include values, traditions, communication styles, learning styles, and interpersonal relationship patterns. This knowledge base should be more than an awareness; it should be detailed enough to make education meaningful for, representative of, and responsive to culturally diverse students. It is also important for teachers to understand the contributions of different ethnic groups, so teachers can see the place of diversity within all school subjects.

Multicultural Competence

Multicultural competence is based on the assumption that it is possible to minimize racial and cultural prejudice and that individuals can function comfortably in a new culture without having to discard the identity and culture of their family. Additionally, research in this cluster emphasizes "the absence of racial or cultural

prejudices, and knowledge about the worldviews and funds of knowledge associated with various culture groups" (Bennett, 2001, p. 191). Research on funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 1995; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Moll et al., 1992; Moll et al., 1993; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Vélez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992), ethnic identity development (Banks, 1994), and White identity development (Helms, 1993) will be reviewed as examples of research in the multicultural competence cluster.

Funds of Knowledge

The term "funds of knowledge" was coined by James Greenberg, who was an anthropologist at the University of Arizona (Vélez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992). When Luis Moll joined the University of Arizona faculty, he applied his interest in Vygotskian theory to the study of funds of knowledge, which emphasized cultural resources and the mediation of the development of thinking. Research on cultural funds of knowledge emphasizes the knowledge students bring with them to school from their home and community environments (Gonzalez et al., 1995; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Moll et al., 1992; Moll et al., 1993; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Vélez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992). More specifically, funds of knowledge "refers to those historically developed and accumulated strategies (skills, abilities, ideas, practices) or bodies of knowledge that are essential to a household's functioning and well-being" (Gonzalez et al., 1995, pp. 446-447). These experiences result in rich, cognitive knowledge that families use to navigate future experiences.

The partnership between Greenberg and Moll, and other researchers at the University of Arizona, led to a series of ethnographic studies with teachers exploring the use of families' funds of knowledge as a way of engaging Latino students in school. Teachers participating in the ethnographic studies were involved in the following activities:

1. Community: featuring an ethnographic study of the origin, use, and distribution of funds of knowledge among households in a predominantly Mexican, working-class community of Tucson, Arizona

2. After-school "lab" or study groups: these are settings especially created to enhance the collaboration between teachers and researchers, to discuss research findings, and to play, develop, and support innovations in instruction

3. Schools: featuring classroom studies to examine existing methods of instruction and implement innovations based on the household study of funds of knowledge and conceptualized at the after-school sites. (Gonzalez et al., 1995, p. 446)

Teachers who draw upon these funds of knowledge are able to connect their students' home knowledge and culture with what they are learning in school. From the activities described above, the participating teachers were able to study household knowledge, see beyond stereotypes, and experiment with practice.

Studying household knowledge. Teachers who participated in the studies referenced above interviewed families "regarding regional processes in household origins and development and the labor history of the families, which [revealed] some of the households' accumulated funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez et al., 2001, p. 117). These interviews provided the teachers with more complete understandings of the students, families, and the social worlds in which they lived. Households were recognized for containing "ample cultural and intellectual resources" (Moll et al., 1993, p. 160) and for being active agents who use cultural funds of knowledge to navigate future experiences.

Seeing beyond stereotypes. Teachers often have deficit views of children they have labeled as "other" (Delpit, 1995). By studying the household knowledge of their students, the teachers were able to deconstruct the stereotypes they had heard, and perhaps held, about their students and their families (Gonzalez et al., 2001). The teachers were able to see beyond the tangible artifacts that many typically associate with a culture, including food, dance, clothing, and celebrations, and "engendered a realization that culture is a dynamic concept, and not a static grab bag of tamales, quinceañeras and cinco de mayo

celebrations" (Gonzalez et al., 1995, p. 456). Teachers who draw upon funds of knowledge "validates the household experience as one from which rich resources or funds of knowledge can be extracted" (p. 467) and builds upon this knowledge to plan instruction that is meaningful and relevant for their students.

Experimenting with practice. From the information gathered during the interviews, the teachers developed learning modules (Gonzales et al., 2001) that were used in their classrooms. These activities emphasized inquiry and active involvement from the students. In this classroom, teachers assumed the role of a mediator by providing guidance and assisting students as they construct their own learning (Moll et al., 1993).

Typology of Ethnic Identity

Our identity encompasses both "our understanding of who we are and of who we think other people are" (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 10). Banks (1994) defined a personal identity as,

> the "I" that results from the lifelong binding together of the many threads of a person's life. These threads include experience, culture, and heredity, as well as identifications with significant others and many different groups, such as one's ethnic group, one's nation, and the global community (p. 59).

Banks emphasized that teachers and schools should assist students in developing three "highly interrelated identifications that are of special concern to multicultural educators" (p. 54): ethnic, national, and global identities. Each of these identities is detailed below in the Typology of Ethnic Identity asserted by Banks (1994). This typology was an appropriate framework for exploring the ethnic identity of my participants because it is not race specific, it focuses on education, and it is aligned with multicultural education. Banks stated that the model should not be interpreted as being strictly linear and that each stage is a gradual process. His model included six stages of ethnic identity development: ethnic psychological captivity; ethnic encapsulation; ethnic identity clarification;

biethnicity; multiethnicity and reflective nationalism; and globalism and global competency.

Ethnic psychological captivity. An individual in this stage of ethnic identity development has absorbed "the negative ideologies and beliefs about his or her ethnic group that are institutionalized within the society" (Banks, 1994, p. 224). As a result, these individuals experience low self-esteem and ethnic self-rejection. In addition, they avoid contact with other ethnic groups, and seek cultural assimilation. However, the individual is not always granted "structural assimilation or total societal participation" (p. 224) resulting in internal conflict. Ethnic groups that have been stigmatized are more likely to experience ethnic psychological captivity.

Ethnic encapsulation. Individuals in this stage of ethnic identity development separate themselves from other ethnic groups, "[believe] that his or her ethnic group is superior to other groups," and "have internalized the dominant societal myths about the superiority of their ethnic or racial group and the innate inferiority of other ethnic groups and races" (p. 224). Two experiences can make the characteristics described above the most extreme: 1) the introduction of another ethnic group into a predominantly ethnically homogeneous community; and 2) individuals who have discovered their ethnicity and feel pride in their ethnic heritage after having experienced ethnic psychological captivity. Members of other ethnic groups often describe individuals at this stage of ethnic identity development as racists or extremists.

Ethnic identity clarification. Individuals at this stage have "self-acceptance, thus developing the characteristics needed to accept and respond more positively to outside ethnic groups" (p. 225). With ethnic identity clarification individuals have accepted both the positive and the negative characteristics of his or her ethnic group. This stage typically comes as the result of positive interactions with members of other ethnic groups.

Biethnicity. An individual who is biethnic, has a strong sense of ethnic identity and possesses the characteristics necessary to participate in multiple cultures: her or his own and another ethnic culture (Banks, 1994). For example, an African-American who maintains a strong ethnic identity at home and with family, but who is able to function successfully in the Anglo-American culture for employment purposes would be described as a biethnic.

Multiethnicity and reflective nationalism. An individual who has reached the fifth stage of ethnic identity development, multiethnicity and reflective nationalism, has obtained the following:

> [a] positive personal, ethnic, and national identifications; positive attitudes toward other ethnic and racial groups;…[and the ability to function], at least beyond superficial levels, within several ethnic cultures within his or her nation and to understand, appreciate, and share the values, symbols, and institutions of several ethnic cultures within the nation. (Banks, 1994, p. 226)

In this stage, people are characterized as having a strong commitment to human dignity and justice. Banks believed that few people reach a place where they can participate and function within other ethnic cultures at meaningful levels.

Globalism and global competency. Someone in the final stage of ethnic identity development, globalism and global competency, has obtained "the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities needed to function within ethnic cultures within his or her own nation as well as within cultures outside his or her nation in other parts of the world" (Banks, 1994, p. 226). In addition, they have "universalistic ethical values" and the commitment needed to implement and act on these beliefs in the world to actualize personal values and commitments.

White Racial Identity

According to Tatum (1997), we often focus on the aspects of our identity "that other people notice, and that reflect back to us" (p. 21). In other words, we focus on the aspects of our identity that set us apart from the people around us. Since the majority of teachers in the United States are White, middle class females (NCES, 2005), teachers who identify in this way are not often faced with situations where "their inner experience and outer circumstance" are in conflict (Tatum, 1997, p. 21). The absence of this dissonance often results in those aspects of identity escaping conscious attention.

Helms (1993) asserted that individuals who deny the existence of racism have difficulty developing a positive White racial identity. Three types of racism that have been identified are: 1) individual, which are "personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors designed to convince oneself of the superiority of Whites" over other racial groups; 2) institutional, which includes "social policies, laws, and regulations whose purpose is to maintain the economic and social advantages of Whites" over other racial groups; and 3) cultural, which are "societal beliefs and customs that promote the assumption that the produces of White culture…are superior to those of non-White cultures" (p. 49). Helms offered a six-stage developmental model for overcoming these aspects of racism and defining a positive White identity: contact, disintegration, reintegration, which make up the abandonment of racism phase; and pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, autonomy, which comprise the defining a non-racist white identity phase.

Contact. In the contact phase, individuals are unaware of or indifferent about the existence of racism by claiming that it no longer exists. Additionally, they have a colorblind approach to race and profess that they do not see color. Typically, their interactions with African-Americans (the "other" racial group of focus in Helms's model) are limited to the workplace environment or individuals who do not "act like a Black

person" (Helms, 1993, p. 57). If they have limited to no interactions with African-Americans and other Whites around them reinforce negative information about African-Americans, "particularly the aspect of the stage associated with fearfulness and caution" (p. 57), then individuals are likely to remain in the contact stage for a considerable amount of time. If they continue to interact with African-Americans, someone in this environment is likely to challenge their deficit views and help them become aware of the differential treatment of Whites and African-Americans in the United States. This increased awareness can lead to the disintegration stage.

Disintegration. This stage begins with the "conscious, though conflicted, acknowledgement of one's Whiteness" (Helms, 1993, p. 58). People in this phase often experience guilt and depression and are overwhelmed by the realization "that racism is real and pervasive and is affecting their lives" (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p. 23). In this phase, individuals try to resolve their discomfort and feelings of conflict by avoiding contact with African-Americans, encouraging others in their lives to question the notion of other racial groups as inferior, searching for affirmation from others that racism is not to be blamed on Whites, or retreating back to the belief that racism no longer exists. Individuals who are able to direct their internal discomfort and conflict toward positive outcomes and who recognize they can change their beliefs and actions move into the reintegration stage.

Reintegration. People in the reintegration stage consciously recognize a White identity, but have returned to the belief that Whites are superior to other racial groups. Though not all Whites pass through this stage, some resolve their feelings of guilt by returning to their previously held beliefs. People often remain in this stage particularly if they avoid situations that may challenge this belief or if they are "relatively passive in [their] expression of [racism]" (Helms, 1993, p. 60). In addition, they are unlikely to

return to conversations about race and racism since have already engaged in such conversations and do not believe they need to have them again. To move into the next stage, pseudo-independent, individuals must return to examining and questioning their racial identity.

Pseudo-independent. The pseudo-independent stage is the first in the second phase of Helms's (1993) developmental model, a non-racist White identity. In this stage, people actively seek ways to redefine their identity. While in the process of discarding their belief in a White superiority, they may behave in ways that perpetuate the social structure by "helping Blacks to change themselves so that they function more like Whites" (p. 61). In addition, to appear like "good whites" to others (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p. 24), people in this stage may intentionally build relationships with people of color. Once pseudo-independent individuals seek a more positive definition of Whiteness, they move toward the immersion/emersion stage.

Immersion/Emersion. In this stage, people actively search "for the answers to the questions: 'Who am I racially?' and 'Who do I want to be?' and 'Who are you really?'" (Helms, 1993, p. 62). People in this phase are encouraged and empowered by their developing understanding of racism "because it provides a framework for identifying what needs to be changed in society, as well as in oneself" (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p. 24). Instead of working to change African-Americans, they focus on changing the beliefs of Whites and are inspired by the journeys of other Whites who have undergone similar shifts in identity.

Autonomy. In the autonomy stage, "the person no longer feels a need to oppress, idealize, or denegrate people on the basis of group membership…because race no longer symbolizes threat to him or her" (Helms, 1993, pp. 65-66). As part of the non-racist White identity, a person at this stage looks for situations where she or he can learn from

other racial and cultural groups and has a developing awareness of other "isms," such as ageism, sexism, and classism, and the relationship to racism. Although this is the final stage in Helms's developmental model, she recognizes that having a healthy White racial identity is a lifelong process.

Societal Equity

The underlying premise of the final cluster, societal equity, is that societal change is possible and necessary for equal access to education and achievement. Research within this cluster focuses on population trends and demographics, popular culture and its portrayal of problematic racial images, and social action to bring about change, inequities, and injustices in a variety of contexts including home, school, and community contexts, as well as contexts on the state, national or global level (Bennett, 2001). I have focused on the final genre in this cluster, social action, because of its application to the context of school and to the espoused beliefs of the participants in this study. Included within the genre of social action are the following: transformative teaching (Banks, 1995) and research on justice and caring (Blizek, 1999).

Transformative Teaching

Banks (1995) asserted the concept of race was constructed "by groups to differentiate themselves from other groups, to create ideas about the 'Other,' to formulate their identities, and to defend the disproportionate distribution of rewards and opportunities within society" (p. 22). He believes this notion can be used in school and university settings in combination with multicultural education to teach students how knowledge has been historically reinvented and reconstructed. By transforming teaching, curriculum, pedagogy, and the students' role in the construction of their learning are significantly changed. The curriculum is transformative teaching is "organized around

powerful ideas, highly interactive teaching strategies, active student involvement, and activities that require students to participate in personal, social, and civic action to make their classrooms, schools, and communities more democratic and just" (p. 22). This process begins by recognizing how the "in-group" creates its identity by constructing racial out-groups as "other."

Racializing the other. The construction of racial groups "has not only served as a source of self-identification for powerful and mainstream groups but may have also contributed to the development of some of their important ideas about freedom and democracy" (p. 22). In classrooms, students study events in American history that has led to the construction of racial categories and how these constructions have been maintained, or how they have changed, over time.

The changing conceptions of race. Banks (1995) believed an important teaching implication of students' examining the changing conceptions of race "is that students need to understand the extent to which knowledge about race, and even the very idea of race…is a social construction that reflects both the objective reality as well as the subjectivity of the knower" (p. 23). In addition, it is important for students to understand how race is a reflection of social, historical, and economic contexts and continues to undergo change, deconstruction, and reconstruction. Through a study of race, students are able to understand how social and cultural contexts influences the construction of knowledge and apply this examination to other conceptions, including affirmative action and equal rights.

Justice and Caring

In the edited volume *Justice and Caring: The Search for Common Ground in Education*, researchers described the relationship between care and justice. A chapter by Blizek (1999) explored people's understandings of care and justice that can lead to the

justification of "uncaring and unfair acts as moral ones" (Noddings, 1999, p. 3). Blizek (1999) suggested individuals undergo a self-study of how she or he discusses care and justice as a way toward authentic caring and the alignment of motives with caring behaviors.

According to Blizek, "it is not just what people do to us or for us that matters, but how they do it, or with what attitude they do what they do (p. 96). These attitudes are not always easy to identify since they are often conveyed through non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions, rather than overt actions. He asserted that "[c]aring is not just a matter of doing something, of acting in a particular way. It is also a matter of attitude" (p. 97). Therefore, a caring act done with an insincere attitude makes that act uncaring.

An emphasis on body language, facial expressions, and the tone of voice are found within Blizek's descriptions of the relationship between motivation and authentic caring acts. We cannot always know the true motivation behind the actions of others. Therefore, true caring is determined by whether we act in our best interest or the interest of others. In the classroom, teachers should consider the "ways in which we…deceive ourselves about our motivations in interacting with our students and with others" (p. 100). For example, a teacher who advocates for a "cutting-edge curriculum" because of the status of saying she or he uses this curriculum or the opportunities it may afford her or him for grant monies in preparation for implementing this curriculum, rather than because the curriculum is in the best interests of her or his students.

Summary

The approaches to multicultural education described above provided the second body of research forming the framework through which pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms were explored. Researchers have

written of the importance of embedding conversations about diversity throughout teacher education programs as opposed to providing "stand-alone multicultural education courses" (Sleeter, 2001, p. 28). However, limited research has examined what pre-service teachers learn about multicultural education from these conversations and courses on diversity. Using the clusters of multicultural education research asserted by Bennett (2001), I have presented the research I used to analyze the participants' beliefs about the following: knowledge valued in school (Banks, 1993; Gonzales et al., 1995; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994a; Moll et al., 1992; Moll et al., 1993; Moll & Gonzales, 2004; Sleeter & Grant, 1994; Vélez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992); classroom community, the process of learning, and communication styles (Gay, 2000, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995); the development of racial and ethnic identity (Banks, 1994; Helms, 1993); conceptions of race (Banks, 1995); and caring relationships between teachers and students (Blizek, 1999; Gay, 2000, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995).

CONCLUSION

Researchers have argued that the examination of teachers' beliefs is essential to improving teacher education and should be the focus of educational research (Pajares, 1992), since pre-service teachers bring to their teacher education programs beliefs that have been socially constructed and continue to influence their professional identity and development (Williams, 1996). Additionally, pre-service teachers have beliefs based on experiences with diverse populations that have influenced their "ways of thinking about teaching learners who are diverse" (Milner & Smithey, 2003, p. 294). Without offering courses or field placements to challenge these beliefs, the inequities facing children presently underserved by the educational system are likely to continue. Therefore, it is important for teacher educators to first understand the beliefs held by pre-service teachers, so that their beliefs can be challenged and built on in productive ways. Although

there is large body of research on pre-service teachers' beliefs about diversity and experiences that have challenged these beliefs, there is limited research on pre-service teachers with an interest in teaching in early childhood classrooms and the relationship between their prior beliefs and the experiences they found influential in making them rethink their prior belief systems.

With these ideas in mind, this dissertation had the following purposes: 1) to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms; and 2) to investigate the experiences the pre-service teachers attributed to having influenced and/or challenged their espoused beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. In the following chapter, I outline the research methodology employed during all phases of the study.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

While there is significant research exploring pre-service teachers' beliefs and diversity (e.g., Artiles et al., 1995; Bakari, 2003; Boyle-Baise, 2005; Brindley & Laframboise, 2002; Burant & Kirby, 2002; Causey et al., 2000; Clark & Medina, 2000; Conle et al., 2000; Dee & Henkin, 2002; Gillette, 1996; Hyland & Noffke, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Lea, 2004; McDiarmid & Price, 1990; McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001; Middleton, 2002; Milner, 2006; Milner et al., 2003; Milner & Smithey, 2003; Paine, 1989; Pewewardy, 2005; Santoro & Allard, 2005; Schoorman, 2002; Seidl & Friend, 2002), there remains a lack of research on pre-service teachers' beliefs on teaching in diverse early childhood classroom settings. Considering the growing number of students of a racial or ethnic minority background in our elementary and secondary schools, how to effectively prepare pre-service teachers to teach in diverse schools is a question facing all teacher education programs. Research has pointed to the significant role of beliefs in determining how pre-service teachers receive and interpret the content of their teacher education courses (e.g., Anderson, 2001; Borko & Putnam, 1996; Calderhead, 1996; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Hollingsworth, 1989; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Richardson, 1996, 2003) and the influence these beliefs have on future practice (e.g., Anderson, 2001; Borko & Putnam, 1996; Calderhead, 1996; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Raths, 2001; Trotman & Kerr, 2001). Therefore, understanding pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms is a necessary step in improving the preparation pre-service teachers receive during their teacher education programs. This dissertation addressed the following research questions:

1. What are pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms?

2. What experiences do pre-service teachers attribute to having influenced and/or challenged their espoused beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms?

This chapter detailed the design of the study through a discussion of the following: (a) research process, including epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods; (b) research context; (c) research participants; (d) data collection; (e) data analysis; (f) quality in qualitative research; and (g) ethical considerations.

RESEARCH PROCESS

According to Crotty (2003), the research process is driven by four elements that inform one another: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. The purpose of these four elements is "to ensure the soundness of our research and make its outcomes convincing" (p. 6). Explaining the research process using these four elements justifies the methodologies and methods guiding the research.

Epistemology

Crotty (2003) defines epistemology as "a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (p. 3). The epistemology of this research was constructionism. In constructionism, truth, or meaning, emerges through our engagement and interaction with our world. Therefore, there is no objective truth for a researcher to discover. Rather, reality is dependent upon the "interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). This leads to the possibility that the participants in this study may have constructed meaning in a variety of ways, even when discussing the same phenomenon.

Theoretical Perspective

According to Crotty (2003), theoretical perspective is "the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria" (p. 3). By stating the theoretical perspective, the researcher elaborates "on the assumptions brought to the research task" (p. 7). Interpretivism was the theoretical perspective, or paradigm, framing the study. In the interpretivist approach, the researcher examines interpretations of reality that are culturally derived and historically situated. In this study, I sought to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms with the understanding that their beliefs have been influenced by cultural, social, and historical factors.

Research Methodology

Merriam (1998) defined basic or generic qualitative studies as research that "simply seek[s] to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (p. 11). The basic qualitative study – the most common type of qualitative research in education – utilizes interviews, observations, and documents in data collection. Data analysis typically consists of identifying recurring patterns that are found throughout the data. The purpose of a basic qualitative study is not "to [build] a substantive theory as it does in ground theory studies" nor is there a "bounded system or functioning unit that circumscribes the investigation" (p. 11) as is found in case study research.

Methods

The research methods are "the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyze data related to some research question or hypothesis" (Crotty, 2003, p. 3). The methods of data collection for this research were interviews, observations, and document

analysis. Since qualitative researchers seek and portray multiple perspectives, "[t]he interview is the main road to multiple realities" (Stake, 1995, p. 64). According to Glesne (1999), interviews can be used in qualitative research as "the sole bases of a study, or [they] can be used in conjunction with data from participant observations and documents." (p. 68). Interviews allow the researcher to find out what is "in and on someone else's mind….when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them" (Merriam, 1998, pp. 71-72).

Researchers have struggled to find ways to effectively research teachers' beliefs (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). It is difficult for researchers to examine beliefs solely through observations (Calderhead, 1996; Kagan, 1990), since it is difficult to observe beliefs "or how people interpret the world around them" (Merriam, 1998, p. 72). Instead, researchers should use multiple methods of data collection, including interviews in addition to observations (Kagan, 1990; Pajares, 1992; Wideen et al., 1998). According to Merriam (1998), interviews allow the researcher to find out what is "in and on someone else's mind" (p. 71). Additionally, Wideen et al. (1998) suggested that researchers provide detailed accounts of how data was collected, analyzed and interpreted, and provide clear explanations for the raw data (e.g. interview excerpts) that they choose to include in their findings. Although complicated, research on pre-service teachers' beliefs provides an important understanding of the diverse perspectives pre-service teachers bring with them to teacher education programs and can assist teacher educators in developing coursework that better prepares graduates for their future work as educators (Pajares, 1992).

Observations provide researchers with information about and an understanding of the research context (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Mertens, 1998). In addition, I was able to learn the following through observations:

> …how the actions of research participants correspond to their words; see patterns of behavior; experience the unexpected, as well as the expected; and develop a quality of trust with your others that motivates them to tell you what otherwise they might not. (Glesne, 1999, p. 43)

From these observations, additional interview questions can develop based on "known behavior, and their answers can therefore be better interpreted" (p. 43). As an observer, Glesne reminded us that the purpose of being in the research setting is not to preach or compete for status; the focus should remain on the research participant. When taking field notes, Glesne suggested the research "make notes and jot down thoughts without narrow, specific regard for your research problem" (p. 48). These notes should be detailed enough that the researcher can return to them and be able to visualize what has been described.

Documents collected during the research study "corroborate your observations and interviews and thus make your findings more trustworthy" (Glesne, 1999, p. 58). Additionally, documents support your observations and "[challenge] portrayals and perceptions" (p. 58) and can serve as a "reliable source of data concerning a person's attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world" (Merriam, 1998, p. 116). From the collection of documents, addition questions may be developed and asked during interviews.

RESEARCH CONTEXTS

There were two larger contexts in which this study took place: a large university in the Southwest and three school districts where the participants completed their field placements that served the urban and suburban populations of a mid-sized central Texas city. I will now describe these contexts in more detail.

State University

All participants were enrolled in the Professional Development Sequence (PDS) at State University, a large university in the Southwest. According to the College of Education website at State University, graduates of this teacher education program have

completed 130 hours of coursework including 36 hours of coursework and internships during the PDS. The PDS lasts three semesters and are the final three semesters of the undergraduate program. During the first semester of the PDS, students are enrolled in 12 semester hours of coursework as well as an internship 12-14 hours per week in a pre-kindergarten or kindergarten classroom. The second semester of the PDS consists of 12 semester hours of coursework with a 16-hour per week internship in a first through fourth grade classroom. During the third and final semester of the PDS, students are enrolled in 12 semester hours, including apprentice teaching where students are in a pre-kindergarten through fourth grade classroom for 40 hours per week for 13 weeks. The planning and teaching of whole-class lessons is a requirement of all pre-service teachers during their teacher education program. Pre-service teachers during the apprentice teaching semester are required to teach lessons daily adding subject areas as they continue throughout the semester. Subjects are added until the pre-service teachers have acquired responsibility for all areas of instruction in a two-week period called Total Teach. At the end of Total Teach, the apprentice teacher gradually releases the planning and teaching of subjects back to the cooperating teacher.

A focus of State University's teacher education program is to "provide intensive field experiences that expose students to an increasingly diverse youth population" (University Webpage, 2005). At least one of the field placements during the PDS must be completed in a diverse school setting. Further, the College of Education is committed to providing graduates with the "dispositions and skills needed to be highly qualified and effective teachers of students from racial, ethnic, linguistic, or socioeconomic groups currently underserved by the education system" (Teacher Education Committee, 2004). However, these ideals are implemented to varying degrees depending upon the course

instructor and her or his commitment to providing graduates with these dispositions and skills.

In this teacher education program, students are required to take a course on multicultural education entitled *Sociocultural Influences on Learning*; this course may be taken prior to admission to the PDS or while pre-service teachers are enrolled in the PDS. Students are required to take one of the following courses on the acquisition of language: *Second Language Acquisition*, *Literacy Acquisition*, or *Psychology of Reading*. Depending on the course selected, students receive varying amounts of information regarding second language learners. The only course on diversity that is required for admission to the PDS is *Individual Differences*, which addresses education for children with special needs. Although the pre-service teachers may receive information about teaching in diverse classrooms in other courses, these courses were designed to focus on various aspects of diversity. Additionally, these courses were mentioned most frequently by the participants in this study; for some of the participants, these were the only courses they recalled receiving information about teaching in diverse classrooms.

School Districts

The participants completed their apprentice teaching in one of three school districts serving the urban and suburban populations of a mid-sized city in central Texas. Nine of the pre-service teachers serving as participants in this study completed their apprentice teaching in City School District. According to the district website, approximately 54% of the district-wide student population is Latino, 28% is Caucasian, 14% is African-American, 3% is Asian American, and 1% is Native American. Five of the pre-service teachers completed their apprentice teaching in Woodward School District. According to the district website, approximately 58% of the district-wide population is Caucasian, 23% is Latino, 10% is African-American, and 9% is of other

ethnic backgrounds. The remaining pre-service teacher completed her apprentice teaching in Williams School District. According to the district website, 37% of the district-wide population is Caucasian, 32% is Latino, 22% is African-American, 8% is Asian American, and 1% is Native American.

In Texas, the state in which this study took place, the passing of NCLB has resulted in the implementation of standards that specify the knowledge and skills that students must master at each grade from kindergarten through twelfth grade in the subject areas of reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health, physical education, fine arts, economics, career and technology education, and technology applications (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). The Texas Education Agency also has developed Pre-kindergarten Guidelines. Starting in third grade, students are assessed in certain subject areas by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The scores on these high-stakes test determine promotion for students at certain grades and are used to measure the quality of individual schools and school districts. In City School District, the district where the majority of the participants completed their apprentice teaching, Individual Planning Guides (IPGs) were developed for each grade level in reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The IPGs were created as a way to organize the TEKS for each grade with the hope of ensuring that students had mastered the TEKS for their grade level by the end of the academic year. The IPGs provided teachers with detailed daily lesson plans, including instructional materials, for each of the core subject areas listed above. Information about the TEKS and IPGs has been included because some of the participants felt these documents limited the lessons they taught during the internship and apprentice teaching semesters.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Students in the PDS at State University complete the final three semesters of their undergraduate program in a cohort. Each cohort is lead by a coordinator who is responsible for the pre-service teachers' placement in the field (internships and apprentice teaching) and who serves as the instructor for some of their courses. The courses during the PDS consist of methods courses in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies; a course which focuses on teaching in a pre-kindergarten or kindergarten classroom; a course on human learning and development; and a course on classroom management. In addition, pre-service teachers participate in cohort seminars. The frequency and topics of these seminars vary by cohort.

In the early childhood to fourth grade generalist certification program, there were four cohorts of pre-service teachers completing the final semester of the PDS during the Spring 2007 semester. The four cohort coordinators were contacted in November 2006 to determine when I could meet with their pre-service teachers to provide them with an overview of the study and the requirements of participation. Two of the coordinators contacted me and scheduled a time for me to offer their pre-service teachers the opportunity to participate in the research. One of the cohort coordinators did not believe his cohort members would be interested in participating in the research. I did not receive a response from the fourth cohort coordinator.

When meeting with the pre-service teachers, I stated that I was interested in learning about the beliefs and practices of pre-service teachers completing their apprentice teaching in a diverse classroom. Because of my focus on early childhood education, I was interested in interviewing pre-service teachers who were placed in a pre-kindergarten through third grade classroom at a diverse school. The pre-service teachers were given the opportunity to ask additional questions about the research or what was

required of participants. Questions included how long the interviews would take and where interviews would take place. Informed consent letters were available at the time of participant recruitment for those who were interested in volunteering.

Table 3.1 provides an overview of the pre-service teachers who served as participants in this study. Thirteen of the fifteen participants were receiving their first baccalaureate degree from the College of Education at State University. Two of the participants, Amy and Pam, were post-baccalaureate students pursuing teacher certification through the early childhood through fourth grade generalist program.

Table 3.1 – Participating Pre-service Teachers*

	Self-Identity	Definition of Diversity	Grade	District During Apprentice Teaching
Amanda	Caucasian	Ra, E, C, Re	K	Suburban
Amy	Indian	C, L, G	1st	Urban
Ariel	Chinese-American	C, G	1st	Suburban
Brenna	Caucasian	Ra, C, L, SES	2nd	Urban
Brittany	Vietnamese-American	Ra, E, L, SES, Re	1st	Urban
Brooke	Caucasian	Ra, C, L, G, Re, A	K	Urban
Emma	Caucasian	E, SES, F	3rd	Suburban
Hailey	Caucasian	Ra, G	2nd	Urban
Jane	Hispanic	E, Re	1st	Urban
Kaci	Caucasian	Ra, C, L, SES, SP	Pre-k	Urban
Liz	Caucasian	Ra	2nd	Suburban
Michelle	Caucasian	Ra, G, Re	1st	Urban
Olivia	Caucasian	Ra, E, SES, G	1st	Suburban
Pam	Indian	Ra, E, C, A	Pre-k	Urban
Sarah	Caucasian	E, C, SES, Re	1st	Suburban

* All names are pseudonyms selected by the pre-service teacher.
Ra = Race; E = Ethnicity; C = Culture; L = Language; SES = Socio-economic Status; G = Gender; Re = Religion; A = Ability; SP = Sexual Preference; F = Family Structure

Experiences with Diversity

In an effort to provide a more complete understanding of the participants, their beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms, and the experiences they

attributed to having influenced and/or challenged their beliefs, I will highlight interview data that pointed to the range of beliefs and experiences the participants brought with them to State University and the experiences they had during their enrollment at State University and in the PDS. While their definitions of diversity included a variety of descriptors (see Table 3.1), when describing their experiences with diversity in their neighborhoods and schools, the participants typically limited their responses to the following descriptors: race, ethnicity and culture, which the participants often used interchangeably; and socio-economic status. The participants' prior experiences with diversity have been categorized as Growing Up in a Bubble; Together but Separate; If You Were Anywhere on the AP Track…; I'm More Americanized; and Different Cultures Working Together.

Growing Up in a Bubble

For some of the participants, their university experiences and field placements in diverse early childhood classrooms presented them with one of their first opportunities to move outside their "bubble." Michelle said, "My community wasn't really diverse, my particular schools. Mainly middle-class, white students, so I really, that's why I really don't know much about other cultures. I'm learning as I'm in the classroom" (Michelle, interview, January 29, 2007). Her experiences outside of school were also characterized by limited interactions with and the absence of discussions about diversity. She explained, "Yeah, [diversity] wasn't talked about. We were in our bubble kind of thing" (interview, January 29, 2007).

Amanda also described the students she attended school with as "definitely not" diverse. When I asked Amanda to describe her identity, she seemed unsure of how to respond, "Identifying being what am I? I guess white, Catholic; that's all I've got" (Amanda, interview, December 6, 2006). Whiteness has been called "the invisible norm

of our society" (Ramsey, 2004, p. 69). Tatum (1997) described an activity where her students are asked to complete the sentence "I am _____" with as many descriptors they could think of to describe themselves in one minute. Tatum reported that while her students who identify as racial minorities usually listed their racial or ethnic group, her White students rarely listed that they are White.

When asked to describe her identity, Olivia said, "I'm pretty much the norm." I asked her to explain what she meant by the "norm," and Olivia replied, "Well, I'm a white girl. I grew up, well, I haven't had any huge obstacles to overcome so I mean, I'm the majority" (interview, November 17, 2006). Until her junior year of high school, Olivia attended school with students who were also "the majority,"

> Up to my junior year of high school, I didn't have much diversity in my classroom. I went to private schools or neighborhood schools that weren't very diverse. But then I did have lots of diversity my junior and senior year of high school…It was a culture shock in that things were louder and what was taught in the classroom and what the teachers expected. Expectations weren't set as high. Like I would go to a teacher and be worried about getting an "A" and they would say, "Oh, well you're passing." So I think there wasn't as much expected. And then even just the types of classes that were offered; it was more like shop class and different things that weren't necessarily preparing you for higher education. (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006)

Amy was the only participant who did not attend elementary and secondary school in the United States. She described similar limited experiences with diversity during her elementary and secondary school years in India,

> The school I went to, we were only girls; I didn't go to a girls and boys school. It was mostly people from the same background as me. Mostly the same language, but in India you have so many different dialects, so there were a few girls in my class who spoke a different dialect. But our backgrounds were almost the same. So it wasn't really diverse. (Amy, interview, February 16, 2007)

Conversations about diversity, with an emphasis on acceptance and treating others as equal, were present in Amy's school and home. She explained,

> It was really acceptable, because we didn't grow up thinking, "Oh you can't talk to a person just because they are from a different country or a different culture." If you know anything about the background in our country, it's mostly between Pakistanis and Indians; it's always been a conflict. But I had girls in my class that moved from Pakistan to India. It was never like, "Ooh, you shouldn't talk to her; you shouldn't be good friends just because they have another culture or they're from another country or they have another background." You just treated everybody equal; just like how you wanted to be treated by them. That's how we were taught at school or at home. (Amy, interview, February 16, 2007)

Although Amy discussed attending school with girls from India and Pakistan, she emphasized that their "backgrounds were almost the same" (Amy, interview, February 16, 2007), thereby minimizing or ignoring the cultural differences between the two groups and assuming they were the same. Miller, in Tatum (1997), explained that members of dominant racial groups "can avoid awareness because their explanation of the relationship becomes so well integrated…they can even believe that both they and the subordinate group share the same interests and, to some extent, a common experience" (p. 24). As a result, members of the dominant racial group learn little about the experiences of groups considered to be subordinate.

Together but Separate

Other participants attended elementary, junior high, and high schools they described as racially diverse. However, the presence of racial cliques limited their interactions with, and for two of the participants, their memories of students from other racial groups. Liz explained, "We were pretty much all the same. We were all, my group at least, we were not that diverse" (interview, March 8, 2007). In Liz's family, "difference" was talked about as being "no different." According to Ramsey (2004), the racial privileges afforded to Whites enable them to be colorblind. These assertions "are often well intentioned efforts at overcoming barriers, [when] they in fact exacerbate racial tensions" (p. 71). Although Liz was raised to believe that "difference" was in fact

not different at all, she focused on her "group" and left the other students at her school out of her description. Emma also limited her description of her experiences in school to her "core group of people,"

> It's hard to say. I feel like the core group of people that I knew had a very cookie-cutter family, as did I. I went to large schools, so I know it was diverse. Honestly, I think everyone, most of my close friends lived with both parents. Everyone was pretty middle class. I didn't know anyone who was struggling, whose parents were struggling to pay bills or something like that. (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007)

Tatum (1997) described the energy involved in not noticing race. She explained that Whites often learn not to notice as a result of their parents' discomfort with racial observations and their uncertainty of how to respond. Tatum continued, "But in not noticing, one loses opportunities for greater insight into oneself and one's experience. A significant dimension of who one is in the world, one's Whiteness, remains uninvestigated and perceptions of daily experience are routinely distorted" (p. 201). Without such self-examination, the privilege associated with Whiteness is not recognized.

Like Liz and Emma, Ariel remembered cliques in high school as being divided by race. However, she recalled a different experience in elementary school,

> In elementary school, I had friends of every color. I wasn't aware, but I guess [it's] because I never really thought about that until high school and you start noticing…Growing up, I had friends that were Asian, Black, White, and Hispanic. [In high school] my friends were all mainly Asian. I had friends of other races, too, but the main ones were Asian. (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006)

Like many of the other participants, Ariel did not have conversations about diversity with her family. "It wasn't talked about at all at home…It just, it was never brought up" (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006). For another participant whose school experiences with diversity have been described as together but separate, tension accompanied the racial segregation. Hailey explained,

> [My schools were] very diverse. In junior high and high school, I went to a small school, and you just had so many different cliques. Just the races. I mean, if they were black and you were white, then they were always talking smack to you and just, "Oh, you're doing that. You're getting your way. You're white. You're a cheerleader." That type of thing. (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007)

When I asked Hailey how diversity was talked about as she was growing up, she replied, "It wasn't talked about; it was kind of kept quiet." I asked her to explain why she thought conversations about diversity were kept quiet,

> Like the ones who weren't well off, you wouldn't want to say anything about them just to make them feel bad. I mean, that was just something that you would keep to yourself…I mean, the lower class would maybe say something about the higher class, but the higher class wouldn't say anything about the lower. I guess, you know they all wish they could be that way too, and it just wasn't for them and they maybe were jealous…They wanted to be like you and so that's why they would talk about you and stuff would get started and that type of thing. (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007)

While the other fourteen participants recognized the absence of conversations about diversity as they were growing up or the focus on respect and tolerance, Hailey was the only participant to provide a response that suggested the only way to talk about diversity was to "say [something] about them just to make them feel bad" so these were comments "that you would keep to yourself." Throughout the interview, the tension between racial and socio-economic groups in the community where Hailey grew up became apparent. When describing both her schooling experiences and conversations about diversity from her childhood, phrases such as "talking smack to you" and "maybe they were jealous," suggested the African-Americans were to blame for this tension and not the other Whites in her community.

If You Were Anywhere on the AP Track…

For two of the participants, while there was racial diversity in their schools, other factors meant that they, too, attended classes with students from similar racial backgrounds. Brooke attributed her limited experiences with diversity as a child to two

things: zoning and district lines in the small town where she lived and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. She explained,

> In my schooling, I really had a very limited experience with people who were different from me, especially in high school. The other high school in town was definitely more; it had a lot more diversity in it. So you take that, a smaller diverse population, and then you consider the AP courses, [which] were predominantly white. I don't think that's a good thing, but it happens a lot. There was still definitely a separation [by race]. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

At home, "there was never talk from my parents or family" about diversity or the racial separation Brooke experienced in school. In elementary school, diversity was limited to "one afternoon a week where you did some sort of activity about different cultures" (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007). Brooke recognized that these activities "seemed very forced" and were not integrated throughout the curriculum.

As with many of the other participants in this study, conversations about diversity were silenced among Sarah's friends and family. "That wasn't actually a whole lot of talk about it at all" (Sarah, interview, December 5, 2006). Sarah also recognized the influence of Advanced Placement (AP) courses on whether or not she would be in classes with students from diverse backgrounds. She reflected on this separation in an interview,

> I attended the same school [from kindergarten] through 12th grade. Classes were pretty much, if you were anywhere on the AP track or the advanced track, you were not mixed with general classes, which were more Hispanic. I really think it was racism. I thought it was racism then and I still think it is racism now. We had maybe one AP Black student and one AP Hispanic student throughout the whole school. (Sarah, interview, December 5, 2006)

Several researchers have discussed the tracking that occurs in schools, particularly secondary schools. This tracking typically mirrors "the system of advantage operating in schools" (Tatum, 1997, p. 56). As a result, in schools that are racially mixed, children of color are more likely to be found in general education courses, or lower track courses, rather than honors or AP courses, just as observed by Brooke and Sarah.

I'm More Americanized

Other participants, though they identified themselves as an ethnic minority, described themselves identifying more closely with the American culture. According to Jane,

> I'm Hispanic, but I think I'm more Americanized, because my parents, they were born in the U.S. and they really didn't, we really didn't do many Mexican heritage things and they didn't teach me to speak Spanish either. So I think I'm more American, but sometimes I do identify with my Hispanic culture, but in a different way because I'm kind of an outsider. (Jane, interview, December 11, 2006)

When asked to describe her experiences with diversity, Jane initially struggled to provide an answer, because "I can't even identify with my own ethnicity because I'm so distant from it" (Jane, interview, December 11, 2006). Later in the interview, Jane noted her limited experiences with diversity in the community where she grew up and recalled experiences with diversity – limited to race and ethnicity – outside of her schooling experiences,

> The majority of where I'm from is populated by Mexican-Americans. I didn't go to school with a lot of African-American students. I think the majority of us were Hispanic. I mean I know that through our religion, we [went] to church with a lot of diverse people – Filipinos and Whites and Hispanics and some African-American people. (Jane, interview, December 11, 2006)

Conversations about diversity were absent in Jane's family. She continued, "I mean, [diversity] wasn't really discussed in my family. I think we just knew what it was and we just respected everyone because of that" (Jane, interview, December 11, 2006).

In my initial interview with Brittany, she described herself as "Vietnamese-American, first generation" (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006). In subsequent interviews, she described herself as having been "whitewashed,"

> I don't think it's a bad thing…I'm pretty whitewashed. I don't really, I don't eat Vietnamese food. I talk to my mom in English; she talks to me in Vietnamese. But I'm pretty much, you know, I feel like I was raised as an American…My

> mom and dad aren't whitewashed, but I think since I go to school in America, I feel like I'm very Americanized now, and that's what I mean by whitewashed. (Brittany, interview, April 5, 2007)

During elementary and junior high school, Brittany recalled four family moves. These frequent moves meant Brittany attended schools with several different populations of students,

> I've been to a lot of schools…I went from lower SES to not higher, but a little bit higher. My first elementary school and my second elementary school there were a lot of Hispanics, and then a lot of the reduced lunch. And I was reduced lunch then too. Then, I moved to a different location for junior high and that school, my second junior high, it was a lot more mixed. There were still a lot of Hispanics, but there were also a lot of, the number of Whites, Blacks, and Asians [was higher]. (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006)

With each move and as her family "moved up" in socio-economic status, Brittany noticed her family became more Americanized,

> I guess as you move up in the SES, you tend to be more Americanized. Like even as my family has moved up, we've become a lot more Americanized than we were say, a couple of years ago when we were only speaking Vietnamese and only eating Vietnamese food. (Brittany, interview, April 5, 2007)

Many individuals "are forced to reject parts of their ethnic cultures in order to experience success" (Banks, 1994, p. 47). While many view assimilation "as a weapon of dominant groups designed to destroy the cultures of ethnic minorities and to make their members personally ineffective and politically powerless" (p. 127), Brittany saw assimilation, which she referred to as being Americanized or whitewashed, as a positive and desired outcome.

Pam, whose parents emigrated from India to the United States before she was born, also recognized the powerful influence of American culture on her personal identity, and described herself as "a mix between the two" cultures,

> Well, I kind of feel like I'm a mix between Indian and American culture because my parents immigrated from India to the United States and they raised me pretty much, I was born and raised here, so I do have some Indian values but I also have

> some American values, so I do think of myself as kind of a mix between the two. (Pam, February 13, 2007)

Like Brittany, Pam's elementary and secondary school years were characterized by frequent moves. A move during junior high meant she was no longer "pretty much the only colored person in the room." She continued,

> There were more Indian families, but it was still predominantly Caucasian and there were more Mexican-Americans. When I went to high school, it was a culture shock. Because I moved again and the population there was very different…, so many more people from Asia. (Pam, interview, February 13, 2007)

However, conversations about diversity were still absent, "It wasn't really talked about at all. With friends, maybe a little bit, but definitely not in school. Especially because I came from such a small town and they really didn't address it and they didn't talk about it" (Pam, interview, February 13, 2007). For these participants, all members of an ethnic minority, conversations about the ways in which they were different from those in mainstream United States were largely silenced, according to their childhood memories. They identified themselves as Americanized, either because their families did not teach them about their ethnic background, they wished to be "normal," or they felt caught between two cultures.

Different Cultures Working Together

Two of the participants described their experiences with diversity as working together with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. During Kaci's elementary and junior high school years, she remembered there was "a lot of just one culture." However, diversity was not ignored at home, "Well, we did not see a lot of diversity growing up when going to elementary school, but we talked about it, why it is important to be accepting of everyone and just being open minded." Once Kaci started high school, she attended school and had classes with students from "lots of different cultures,"

> We had two magnet schools on our campus….It was one school with an international school, so there were a lot of exchange students coming in. Lots of different cultures. Then, we had an art school on campus, so definitely just lots of different cultures working together. It was very cool. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

Although Brenna described her schools as being "probably 80% white" and "very much not diverse," she grew up in a family that adopted family members from different countries,

> My family's really big on adoption, not my immediate family, but my aunts and uncles and cousins. They are all from different countries, so she's [one of her aunts] got four kids and they're all different races. They're my family and yeah, they're a different color. We talk openly about, so I guess I've been fortunate in that way because to me it's never been [voice fades]. I think when kids stereotype it's because haven't been around it or been informed or are familiar. (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006)

Tatum agreed. For children who grow up racially segregated communities, the information they receive about those different from themselves "has often been distorted, shaped by cultural stereotypes, and left incomplete" (Tatum, 1997, p. 4). In addition to the cultural stereotypes portrayed in the media and in children's cartoons, children also base their assumptions about others on what they have not been told (Tatum, 1997). These assumptions are often left unchallenged.

Experiences in Field Placements

The elementary schools in which the participants completed their field placements varied in terms of racial backgrounds of the students, the percentage of students considered economically disadvantaged, the percentage of students who had Limited English Proficiency, and the academic ranking of the school based on students' performance on the TAKS test. In Table 3.2, I provide data that describes the participants' field placements during each semester of the three-semester PDS according to these indicators (Texas Educational Agency, n.d.).

Table 3.2 – Participants' Field Placement Schools*

	First Semester Internship	Second Semester Internship	Third Semester Apprenticeship
Amanda	Racially Diverse 26% ED 18% LEP Recognized	Predominately Latino** 78% ED 18% LEP Academically Acceptable	Same school as first semester internship
Amy	Racially Diverse 18% ED 13% LEP Recognized	Predominately White 7% ED 5% LEP*** Exemplary	Same school as second semester internship
Ariel	Predominately Latino 90% ED 40% LEP Academically Acceptable	Predominately Latino 85% ED 60% LEP Academically Acceptable	Predominately White 9% ED 3% LEP Exemplary
Brenna	Predominately Latino 90% ED 40% LEP Academically Acceptable	Predominately Latino 90% ED 23% LEP Academically Acceptable	Same school as second semester internship
Brittany	Predominately Latino 90% ED 40% LEP Academically Acceptable	Predominately White 20% ED 2% LEP Recognized	Same school as second semester internship
Brooke	Racially Diverse 18% ED 13% LEP Recognized	Racially Diverse 41% ED 30% LEP Academically Acceptable	Same school as first semester internship
Emma	Racially Diverse 18% ED 13% LEP Recognized	Predominately White 7% ED 2% LEP Recognized	Same school as second semester internship
Hailey	Racially Diverse 18% ED 13% LEP Recognized	Predominately White 7% ED 5% LEP Exemplary	Same school as second semester internship
Jane	Predominately Latino 90% ED 40% LEP Academically Acceptable	Predominately Latino 90% ED 23% LEP Academically Acceptable	Same school as second semester internship
Kaci	Predominately Latino 90% ED 40% LEP Academically Acceptable	Racially Diverse 26% ED 18% LEP Recognized	Same school as first semester internship
Liz	Predominately White 7% ED 5% LEP Exemplary	Racially Diverse 41% ED 30% LEP Academically Acceptable	Same school as second semester internship

Michelle	Racially Diverse 26% ED 18% LEP Recognized	Predominately White 20% ED 2% LEP Recognized	Same school as second semester internship
Olivia	Predominately Latino 78% ED 18% LEP Academically Acceptable	Racially Diverse 26% ED 18% LEP Recognized	Same school as second semester internship
Pam	Racially Diverse 89% ED 55% LEP Academically Acceptable	Predominately White 7% ED 2% LEP Recognized	Racially Diverse 18% ED 13% LEP Recognized
Sarah	Racially Diverse 26% ED 18% LEP Recognized	Predominately White 9% ED 3% LEP Exemplary	Same school as second semester internship

* ED – Economically Disadvantaged; LEP – Limited English Proficiency
** More than 70% of the student population of one racial background
*** Amy's placement classroom was an ESL classroom with approximately 75% of the students speaking English as a Second Language

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection consisted of two phases. In the first phase, interviews were conducted with 15 pre-service teachers. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour. The participants were interviewed individually following a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A). In semi-structured interviews, the researcher has developed a tentative list of interview questions that allows her to "respond to the situation at hand" (Merriam, 1998, p. 74) by adding, rewording, or eliminating questions. The interview questions sought the participants' beliefs about teaching in a diverse classroom and were based on the approaches to multicultural education framing my study. Additional questions were asked to explore the experiences the participants attributed to having influenced and/or challenged their beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms.

All interviews were conducted at a time and place determined by the participant. Initial interviews began in November 2006 and ended in March 2007. All interviews

were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The audiotapes were kept in a secure location in my home and were destroyed after transcription. After transcribing the interviews, I determined if additional questions were needed to provide more explanation, clarification, description or evaluation of statements or ideas (Glesne, 1999). The transcribed interviews and the additional questions were shared with the participants electronically, which allowed them to add information, clarify statements, and share concerns. The participants' emailed responses to these questions were added to the other data collected and included in data analysis. Of the 15 participants, only five took advantage of the opportunity to share additional information or share their concerns as related to the interviews. Interviews continued until data saturation was achieved (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The second phase of data collection included focused observations of a selected group of participants from the first phase of data collection. Five participants were asked to participate in the second phase of data collection based on their espoused attention to the diverse backgrounds of their students during planning and instruction and an affirming stance toward diversity. Four of the five participants were completing their apprenticeship in a classroom where they had previously completed an internship, either during the first or second semester of the PDS. They all believed their cooperating teachers had given them some flexibility and autonomy in planning lessons. Kaci described the "horrible disservice" it would be "to present only the stereotypes about a culture" (Kaci, electronic response, February 1, 2007), thus demonstrating she had a critical awareness of multicultural education. Like Kaci, Brooke expressed an awareness to move beyond a focus on holidays with her students. During my interview with Brittany, she spoke of her interest in helping her students' "culture feel valued in the classroom" (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006). Brenna emphasized the importance

of "get[ting] to know the family and the students and their lives" as a primary consideration while planning lessons (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006). During my interview with Amy, she discussed creating lessons based on her students' interests and ideas. These five participants initially agreed to participate in the second phase of data. However, only three of these participants, Brenna, Brittany, and Kaci, provided me with classroom schedules and arranged times for me to observe in their classrooms. Brooke participant did not respond to my efforts to contact her; Amy did not contact me until April, when only three weeks remained in her apprenticeship and her teaching in the classroom was limited. Each of the three participants was observed at least seven times for a minimum of one hour per observation. Observation notes were typed and focused on the participant and not the students or the cooperating teacher. Lesson plans were submitted for all lessons observed. Observations continued until the end of the apprentice teaching semester.

The lesson plans provided by the pre-service teachers, together with observations and field notes, served as topics of discussion during additional interviews during the semester and after observations were completed. Brenna was interviewed four times: the initial interview in December 2006, following the first observation in February 2007, during the semester in April 2007, and after observations in May 2007. While I planned to conduct only three interviews, following the first observation Brenna asked if I wanted to talk about her lesson. I took this opportunity to learn more about her beliefs, since she had not responded to the additional questions posed in the interview transcript. Brittany was interviewed three times: the initial interview in December 2006, during the semester in April 2007, and following observations in May 2007. It was more difficult to schedule additional interviews with the third participant in this phase of data collection. Kaci completed the initial interview in December 2006. A second interview was scheduled

early in April 2007 following an observation, but conflicts prevented this interview from taking place. I attempted to schedule an interview with Kaci following observations in May 2007, but was unable to reach her. At Kaci's suggestion, I sent interview questions electronically to her in May 2007. She responded to these questions in July 2007.

As with the initial interviews, the subsequent interviews lasted no longer than one hour and continued until no new information emerged. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. Additional questions were included with the transcript and sent electronically to the participants, where they were given the opportunity to expand and clarify statements and respond to the additional questions. Only Brittany took advantage of the opportunity to provide clarification and respond to additional questions.

DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative research typically results in large amounts of raw data. According to Merriam (1998), it is important to organize data in a timely fashion and to begin preliminary data analysis while data is being collected. As Glesne (1999) pointed out, "[d]ata analysis done simultaneously with data collection enables you to focus and shape the study as it proceeds" (p. 130). Data analysis took place in two stages: preliminary data analysis, which consisted of writing memos, developing analytic files, rudimentary coding schemes, and writing monthly reports (Glesne, 1999); and subsequent data analysis, which consisted of coding, policing, dictating field notes, connoisseurship, progressive focusing and funneling, interim site summaries, memoing, outlining (Huberman & Miles, 1983); and noting patterns and themes, comparisons and contrasts, and conceptual explanations (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Preliminary Data Analysis

Each week after reading and re-reading transcribed interviews, I used memo writing to record reflections, "write down feelings, work out problems, jot down ideas and impressions, clarify earlier interpretations, speculate about what is going on, and make flexible short- and long-term plans for the days to come" (Glesne, 1999, p. 53). Through the process of writing memos, the mind was freed "for new thoughts and perspectives" and "by getting your thoughts down as they occur, no matter how preliminary or in what form, you begin the analysis process" (p. 131). In these memos, I wrote my initial impressions from individual interview transcripts and began to note similar ideas shared by the participants.

Analytic files provided a way to organize useful information and thoughts. Initially, I organized the files "by generic categories such as interview questions, people, and places" (Glesne, 1999, p. 131). For this stage of data analysis, I organized data in two generic categories that addressed the study's research questions: (a) the pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms and; (b) the experiences the pre-service teachers attribute to having influenced and/or challenged their beliefs.

Through the process of adding interview data to analytic files, rudimentary coding schemes emerged. These categories divided and subdivided as the research proceeded. By naming these categories, I became familiar with what I was finding and what answers to research questions were still missing. Initially, I used codes, such as prior knowledge, hands-on activities, peer discussion, grouping, community, and modifications, to categorize the strategies the participants described using in planning and instruction. Their descriptions of multicultural education coursework initially were identified using the following codes: modifications, parents, bilingual, and multicultural materials. Codes

used for data that described the experiences the participants attributed to having influenced and/or challenged their beliefs included personal experiences, university coursework, and field placements.

I wrote monthly reports as a way to monitor "where [I am] and where [I] should consider going" (Glesne, 1999, p. 133). The following categories suggested by Glesne were used in this step of early data analysis: progress, problems, and plans. By reflecting on data collected, I gained insight that lead to "new questions, new hunches, and, sometimes, new ways of approaching the research" (p. 134). In these monthly reports, I wrote my ideas about why participants were focusing on "good teaching" instead of multicultural education; subject areas I had yet to observe in the second phase of data collection; and my "hunch" about the importance of a professional identity in becoming a critically conscious and culturally appropriate teacher.

Subsequent Data Analysis

Although preliminary data analysis provided me with a rudimentary coding schemes, following the completion of data collection the focus must now be "on classifying and categorizing" data (Glesne, 1999, p. 135). Huberman and Miles (1983) outlined a procedure for data analysis that was used in subsequent data analysis:

1. Coding – organizing data by themes
2. Policing – monitoring data to uncover possible biases
3. Dictating field notes – dictating notes from interviews instead of taking verbatim tapes
4. Connoisseurship – seeking knowledge of the school context
5. Progressive focusing and funneling – narrowing data as study progresses

6. Interim site summaries – writing narrative summaries in the middle of data collection to review preliminary findings and to determine research questions not addressed sufficiently

7. Memoing – writing and sharing emerging issues and findings

8. Outlining – developing a standardized writing format for cases (pp. 291-294)

All data sources, interview transcripts, observation field notes, and documents were filed by date. The rudimentary coding that began in preliminary data analysis continued. Instead of dictating notes from interviews, all interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim, as described above in Data Collection. The final three steps, interim site summaries, memoing, and outlining, were combined through the monthly reports described in the section on preliminary data analysis. As described by Miles and Huberman (1984), the subsequent data analysis consisted of noting patterns and themes, moving toward comparisons and contrasts, and finally arriving at conceptual explanations. Merriam (1988) explained that the process of "developing categories, typologies, or themes involves looking for recurring regularities in the data" (p. 133). According to Glesne (1999), "[t]here should be as many codes as needed to subsume all of the data, appreciating that more may develop than will hold up as separate codes. The blending of codes occurs over and over as you reread and reinterpret." (p. 136). This process included expanding, deleting, reorganizing, and renaming my rudimentary coding schemes to make certain that research questions were addressed and that there were no overlapping categories (Merriam, 1998). After this process was completed, the categories were organized by code in separate files.

QUALITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The criteria used to judge quantitative research – reliability, internal validity, external validity, and objectivity – are inappropriate in qualitative research (Guba &

Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wolcott, 1990). Instead, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed the following criteria for judging quality in qualitative research: truth, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. I have provided a discussion of each of these terms and descriptions of how they were used to enhance the quality of this study.

Truth

The criterion of truth judges the internal validity of the research, called credibility in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Judging a study's credibility "asks if there is a correspondence between the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints" (Mertens, 1998, p. 181). The following strategies were used in this research to enhance credibility: member checks, peer examination, and researcher's biases (Merriam, 1998).

In member checking, the researcher "[takes] data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and [asks] them if the results are plausible" (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). Although the process of member checking is time-consuming, "respondents may (1) verify that you have reflected their perspectives; (2) inform you of sections that, if published, could be problematic for either personal or political reasons; and (3) help you to develop new ideas and interpretations." (Glesne, 1999, p. 152). I used member checking following two stages of research: data collection and data analysis. After the interviews were transcribed, participants received a copy of the transcription, which allowed them to add information, clarify statements, and share concerns.

The second method of enhancing credibility I used in this study was peer examination. According to Mertens (1998), the researcher engages in peer examination by asking colleagues to comment on data, findings, analysis and conclusions. Throughout data collection, I met weekly with a group of doctoral students also completing their

dissertations and discussed descriptions, findings, analyses, and interpretations. In addition to these weekly meetings, one of these doctoral students and I met throughout the writing of the dissertation and continued discussions of descriptions, findings, analyses, and interpretations. In these group and individual meetings, I was able to share my initial findings and analyses and receive ideas about additional research that may be helpful to me as I continued data analysis. Additionally, the feedback I received from peers helped to ensure that my voice had not overpowered the voices of my participants.

The final method of enhancing credibility is addressing researcher's biases where the researcher clarifies her "assumptions, worldview, and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study" (Merriam, 1998, p. 205). As previously discussed in the section on the research process, I approached this research from the interpretivist paradigm. In this paradigm, the researcher examines interpretations of reality that are culturally derived and historically situated (Crotty, 2003). The epistemology underlying interpretivism is constructionism. In constructionism, truth, or meaning, emerges through our engagement and interaction with our world. Instead of an objective truth or reality sought in positivist research, reality is dependent upon the "interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 2003, p. 42). This leads to the possibility that people may construct meaning in a variety of ways, even when discussing the same phenomenon. In this study, the participants' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms had been shaped by their prior beliefs, previous cross-cultural experiences, and experiences at State University and in their field placements.

I approached this dissertation with four years prior experience as an early childhood teacher and four years experience as a university facilitator and assistant instructor. These professional experiences were the basis of my interest in conducting this

dissertation. As a classroom teacher, I spent three years teaching second grade in working class neighborhoods in a large, urban school district in Nevada and one year teaching first grade in an upper middle class neighborhood in a small, suburban school district in Oregon. While in Nevada, I taught at two elementary schools where half of the students were Limited English Proficient and two-thirds of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch (Nevada District Webpage, 2005). In addition, these schools reported a transiency rate of at least 42%. While in Oregon, I taught at one elementary school where 83% of the students were White and 12% of the students were Limited English Proficient (Oregon District Webpage, 2006). Percentages for students who qualified for free or reduced lunch and transient rates were not available. Based on my experience, 1 of the 26 students in my class qualified for free or reduced lunch. The 24 students who were enrolled in my class in September when school began remained in our class throughout the year, with 2 students joining our classroom during the school year – 1 in December and 1 in February.

While in Oregon, I made the decision to return to graduate school to pursue a doctoral degree. This decision was based in part because of the lack of attention or interest in addressing diversity I perceived in my colleagues at a school in a predominately White, upper middle class neighborhood. In addition, I was struck by the contrast of the two teaching contexts (Nevada and Oregon), in particular my experiences as the teacher. Once I began my work as a university facilitator, interns and apprentice teachers shared with me their concerns about teaching in classrooms where the students came from backgrounds different than their own. These experiences led me to think more deeply about teaching in diverse classrooms and the preparation I had received through my university experiences.

Applicability

The criterion of applicability judges the external validity of the research, called transferability in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This criterion "is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). One way of judging the transferability of a study is reader or user generalizability. This allows the readers to determine if the study's findings apply to their context, situations, and experiences. The following strategies were included as a way to enhance this study's transferability: rich, thick description and multisite designs.

Rich, thick descriptions give the readers enough description to determine for themselves how closely the research situation matches theirs and whether or not the findings and analysis can be transferred (Merriam, 1998). I have provided sufficient detail of the context of the study and the findings allowing readers to make decisions about the transferability of the research to their context.

Multisite designs utilize "several sites, cases, situations, especially those that maximize diversity in the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 1998, p. 212). By using multisite designs, readers are able to apply the findings to a wider range of contexts. Although the participants in this study were all enrolled at the same university, the participants were members of two different cohorts; their differing experiences in their cohorts and placements created multiple sites where data was collected. Factors that vary among cohorts included professors, cooperating teachers, field placements, seminar topics, and pedagogical practices and curricular content emphasized by the coordinator. This created my ability to "maximize diversity in the phenomenon of interest" (p. 212).

Consistency

The criterion of consistency judges the reliability of the research, called dependability in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This criterion involves "the extent to which research findings can be replicated" while yielding similar results (Merriam, 1998, p. 205). In qualitative research, rather than outsiders getting similar results, dependability asks that readers and other researchers agree that the results make sense, or are dependable, given the data collected. Two strategies I used to enhance the study's dependability were the investigator's position and an audit trail.

By sharing the investigator's position, the readers will have access to the researcher's position in relation to the group being studied, the reason for selecting participants, and the social context of the study (Merriam, 1998). In the following section on ethical considerations, I have described my position in relation to the participants. The social context of my participants and their cohorts were described in the section entitled Research Participants.

In an audit trail, the researcher describes "in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). I kept a detailed record of changes that occurred during the collection of data as needed to answer the research questions and described why those changes were necessary. For example, research questions were added and deleted from the interview protocol based on my analysis of the information these questions yielded during interviews.

Neutrality

The criterion of neutrality judges the objectivity of the research, called confirmability in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This criterion recognizes the influence of beliefs and biases of individuals involved in conducting research,

collecting data, and analyzing data (Mertens, 1998). Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggested a confirmability audit "to attest to the fact that the data can be traced to original sources and that the process of synthesizing data to reach conclusions can be confirmed" (Mertens, 1998, p. 184). Yin (2003) calls this audit leaving a *chain of evidence*.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are five principals Institutional Review Boards (IRB) use to assist in making decisions about research involving human subjects: (a) participants "must have sufficient information to give informed consent/make decisions about participation;" (b) participants "must be able to withdraw, without penalty, from a study at any point;" (c) the researcher must eliminate unnecessary risks; (d) "benefits to subject and society, preferably both, must outweigh all potential risks;" and (e) the research must be "conducted only by qualified investigators (Glesne, 1999, pp. 114-115). However, as Glesne points out you can not set ethics aside once your research proposal has been accepted by IRB or others who monitor research conduct.

An additional ethical consideration is that of a potential conflict of interest between the researcher, the participants, and their respective scholarly obligations. Of the two cohort coordinators that responded to my request to approach their students for participation in the study, one was a coordinator with whom I had worked for three years. Several pre-service teachers in the cohort in which I served as a university facilitator volunteered to participate in this research. This type of research, referred to as a backyard study, can create potential problems due to the researcher's familiarity with the research site. Possible problems could arise from expectations, role confusion, and restrictions from entering assumptions. I will now describe the steps I took to minimize these problems.

Having previous experiences "can set up expectations for certain types of interactions that will constrain effective data collection" (Glesne, 1999, p. 26). This leads to the potential of role confusion, since you already have a role with the setting or participants. There is the possibility that both the researcher and the participants could "experience confusion at times over which role you are or should be playing" (p. 26). To minimize the possibility of role confusion, I waited until after my supervisory duties had ended to interview the participants for whom I served as their university facilitator during the Fall 2006 semester. Thus, I eliminated the possibility of playing multiple roles at the time the interview data was collected. Of the 15 pre-service teachers serving as participants in the first phase of the study, 9 were members of the cohort for whom I served as a university facilitator and 5 had been under my direct supervision in their field placements. In the second phase of the study, all three participants were members of the cohort for whom I served as a university facilitator; two of these participants (Brittany and Kaci) had been under my direct supervision during at least one of the previous two semesters of the PDS.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation explored the beliefs of 15 pre-service teachers with regard to teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. Additionally, the experiences the pre-service teachers attributed to having influenced and/or challenged these beliefs were examined. The procedures for data collection and analysis that guided this study have been outlined in this chapter. In addition, I have described the steps I took to ensure the quality of the research. Merriam (1998) defined qualitative studies as research that "simply seek[s] to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (p. 11). As such, through this dissertation, I hope to illuminate the beliefs of pre-service teachers and their efforts to become teachers for all

children and to help teacher educators design courses and experiences that can that better prepares graduates for their future work as educators in diverse early childhood classrooms.

Chapter Four: Pre-service Teachers and Multicultural Education

The examination of teachers' beliefs is essential to improving teacher education (Pajares, 1992). Based on the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), pre-service teachers enter their teacher education programs with beliefs about teaching and learning that are well-established, based on personal experiences, a filter for future learning, and an influence on behavior (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Raths, 2001; Trotman & Kerr, 2001). In addition to these beliefs about teaching and learning, pre-service teachers have prior experiences with diverse populations that have influenced their "ways of thinking about teaching learners who are diverse" (Milner & Smithey, 2003, p. 294).

Pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching children from diverse backgrounds that are left unchallenged can "serve as a mechanism for reproducing negative and racist attitudes and beliefs that later get translated into teaching approaches that continue to create inequitable education" (Nieto, 1999, p. 31). By challenging pre-service teachers' beliefs about the diverse children they teach, researchers hope to restructure the beliefs of the future teaching force, which they believe will reduce the inequities currently facing students from culturally diverse backgrounds. However, simply having cultural sensitivity and awareness does not mean these will automatically transfer to culturally relevant practices (Nieto, 1999).

By studying different approaches to multicultural education, researchers believe pre-service teachers can gain insight on how to implement each approach in the classroom (Milner et al., 2003). The approaches to multicultural education described in the review of literature were used as a framework in this study for understanding pre-

service teachers' beliefs about multicultural education and teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms.

The pre-service teachers who served as participants in this study were enrolled in a teacher education program that was committed to providing graduates with the "dispositions and skills needed to be highly qualified and effective teachers of students from racial, ethnic, linguistic, or socioeconomic groups currently underserved by the education system" (Teacher Education Committee, 2004). This included providing pre-service teachers with "intensive field experiences that expose students to an increasingly diverse youth population" (University Webpage, 2005). However, the degree to which these ideals were implemented in coursework and field placements varied depending on the instructor or cohort coordinator and her or his commitment to providing graduates with the dispositions and skills described above.

Based on interview data and the electronic responses from the first phase of data collection and qualitative data analysis outlined by Glesne (1999), Huberman and Miles (1984), and Miles and Huberman (1983), several themes emerged around the participants' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms and the experiences that influenced and/or challenged these beliefs: Focusing on Developmentally Appropriate Practice; Marginalizing Multicultural Education; Providing an Interruption of Beliefs; and Shifting and Unstable Beliefs.

In the theme Focusing on Developmentally Appropriate Practice, I will explore how the participants focused on developmentally appropriate practices when describing their beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. The ways in which the participants have reserved multicultural education as being for particular subject areas, grade levels, and groups of children is presented in the theme Marginalizing Multicultural Education. In the theme of Providing an Interruption of Beliefs, the experiences described

by the participants that influenced and/or challenged their beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms will be described. The instability found within the participants' espoused beliefs about teaching in a diverse early childhood classroom is depicted in the theme Shifting and Unstable Beliefs.

THEME ONE: FOCUSING ON DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

> Developmentally appropriate practices result from the process of professionals making decisions about the well-being and education of children based on….knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for the participating children and their families.
>
> Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, pp. 8-9

When asked to describe planning and instruction in a diverse early childhood classroom, the participants focused on developmentally appropriate practices as though they were sufficient for meeting the diverse needs and backgrounds of their students. Although the revised publication of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) placed greater attention to the "understanding of and responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity" (p. 4), this revision has been criticized and called contradictory for celebrating both a shared vision and cultural diversity (Lubeck, 1998). Lubeck stated that while developmentally appropriate practices acknowledged that the tenets of child development widely held by early childhood educators do not hold up when compared to child development in other cultural contexts, the document was still written from the perspective that development is in fact universal. In the second version of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), teachers were encouraged to value the home culture and language of the child, to recognize the acquisition of a second language when assessing students, and to incorporate the culture of students in instruction. When describing developmentally appropriate practice, the

document limits the incorporation of other cultures to literature and social studies and states the goal is to promote acceptance and tolerance of other cultures, an approach to multicultural education described by Sleeter and Grant (1988/1994) as a human relations approach. Although this is a step toward developing practices that are culturally appropriate, the practices remain in conflict with the universal developmental approach upon which developmentally appropriate practices are based. Certainly there are components of developmentally appropriate practice that overlap with the approaches to multicultural education previously described, including encouraging a community of learners, promoting collaborative work among students, and considering the learning preferences of students as part of planning and instruction. However, there are additional characteristics of teachers' practices that are aligned with the various approaches to multicultural education that separate them from teachers whose practices are described as developmentally appropriate. For example, the culturally relevant teachers in *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (Ladson-Billings, 1994a) helped students form connections between multiple identities, ensured their students developed and/or maintained cultural competence, and promoted a critical consciousness by questioning whose truth is presented in the media, textbooks, and other classroom materials. Although overlapping in some areas of practice, developmentally appropriate practices are not equal to the approaches to multicultural education outlined in the review of literature.

Although the practices the participants in this study described were aligned with selected elements of multicultural education, they frequently avoided talking about how they ensured their teaching would be relevant to and meaningful for the children in their classroom from diverse backgrounds. Instead, the participants focused on descriptions of developmentally appropriate practice as though they were culturally appropriate.

Included within the theme of Focusing on Developmentally Appropriate Practice were the following sub-themes: beliefs about how students learn, beliefs about classroom community, and beliefs about teachers and teaching.

Beliefs about How Students Learn

Embedded in the participants' espoused beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms were their beliefs about how students learn. Research has suggested that many pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs with beliefs that position learning as a passive activity (e.g., Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Hollingsworth, 1989; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Joram & Gabriele, 1998). The belief that learning takes place through the absorption of information delivered to students by the teacher was not found in the interview data with the participants in this study. These participants, who were all interested in teaching in early childhood classrooms, believed learning was an active process and favored activities that allowed their students to be actively involved in the construction of knowledge; practices aligned with developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). These practices included active learning, peer collaboration and discussion, and basing lessons off of students' interests. Brooke reflected on her belief that children need to be actively involved in lessons for learning to take place and contrasted this with a more passive learning activity,

> I try to do a lot of hands-on lessons – a lot of them doing the activity or doing the work. I try not to just, you know, sit and lecture them or simply tell them things. I just try to plan the lessons so that they're actively involved in it and interested in it and it's fun for them, because they are not going to be motivated to do something if it's not fun. They don't want to sit in a chair and write on this worksheet. That's not how they learn. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Hailey agreed with Brooke that students needed to be active participants in a lesson for learning to take place. This belief was reinforced after observing a lesson taught by a

parent that first involved students listening passively to a story and then actively involved students in creating their own artwork. The contrast in the level of participation and the students' responses to the lesson were critiqued by Hailey in the following quote,

> A parent came in and was teaching an art lesson over Monet and she was reading a book and was talking about it and the kids were looking everywhere and just not interested…Afterwards, she had them actually engage in an activity and do paintings and I think [it's] really important to work into a lesson something that they're really going to like and be interested in and not just sitting there and listening and memorizing. They've got to be active in it [to] learn anything. (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007)

This observation and subsequent realization was important for Hailey. She used her observations from the art lesson on Monet as she made decisions about the lessons she would teach. For example, she explained a science activity she had recently taught her second graders on balance and motion,

> Like this week we've been doing balance and motion and we've been making tops and spinners and things that roll…They made loops and they [had] a marble that would go down the runway and they got it to go around the loop and it was just really neat watching them trying to figure it out. I wanted them to explore and just see what would happen once they started building it. I did tell them to see if they could make it like a roller coaster. Would it roll all the way even if the marble went upside down? They learned about forces and that they needed to give the marble a little bit of a force or it's not going to go on it's own. (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007)

In this lesson, it was important to Hailey that the students worked together to understand the concept of force as opposed to providing information about force to them. Pam, who was completing her apprentice teaching in a pre-kindergarten classroom, also emphasized the importance of child-directed over teacher-directed lessons.

> I've been learning in school, and the more I learn about it, the more I like it. It's more of a constructivist type philosophy and it's more of a constructivist type of environment I want to foster when I graduate….I feel like kids learn more from play or from interacting with other peers rather than the teacher sitting up there and explaining, "Ok, this is how you do the problem" or "this is how you solve this situation." (Pam, interview, February 13, 2007)

The participants' emphasis on learning as an active process was similar to the findings in research that compared early childhood and elementary pre-service teachers' preferences toward more teacher-directed or more child-directed activities. For example, Buchanan, Burts, Bidner, White, and Charlesworth (1998) and File and Gullo (2002) found that early childhood pre-service teachers at the end of their teacher education programs "favored less frequent use of teacher-directed activities" as compared to elementary pre-service teachers (File & Gullo, 2002, p. 125). While the participants' focus on student-directed lessons was aligned with developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) and elements of multicultural education (Gay, 2000, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995), a discussion of how these practices were meaningful for and relevant to all of their students was not included the participants' responses about what they believed about learning in diverse early childhood classrooms, despite my efforts to place attention on diversity during interviews.

Instead, many of the participants described the importance of actively engaging students in the learning process based on their preferences as students. Similar findings were reported in research by Holt-Reynolds (1992), who found that pre-service teachers referred to their own experiences as students when describing what good teachers should and should not do since they believed their experiences and preferences could be generalized to all students. For the participants in this study, this included descriptions of how they had limited opportunities to engage with the curriculum in meaningful ways during their schooling experiences, and therefore, wanted to shield their students from "worksheets and boring seatwork." For example, Ariel shared,

> I try to come up with creative lessons that will capture and maintain my student's interests. Growing up, I hated worksheets and boring seatwork. I wanted interactive, hands-on lessons, and I guess that is what I try to aim towards when planning and executing a lesson. (Ariel, electronic response, January 16, 2007)

Another participant, Liz, also designed lessons that prevented students from having to complete worksheets as she often was asked to complete as a student. She explained,

> I think about what's going to be engaging for them. I'm not going to sit them down and tell them to read pages 12 through 16 and then fill out a worksheet or answer the questions in the back. I hated that. (Liz, interview, March 8, 2007)

Other participants highlighted the importance of peer collaboration and discussion in the learning process. Sarah wanted to provide her students with opportunities to collaborate because it was something she had missed out on as a student. In an interview with Sarah, she shared her reasons for promoting discussions among her students,

> It is two-part. Partly my CT [cooperating teacher] uses a lot of collaborative work and partly it's something I didn't do as a child. I really like the idea of having children grouped together and discussing things. I think they learn more. (Sarah, interview, December 5, 2007)

Nespor (1987) found that one characteristic of teachers' beliefs was to create classroom environments and activities that were counter to their personal experiences in schools. Nespor called this characteristic of beliefs alternativity. As seen in the excerpts from Ariel, Liz, and Sarah, the decisions these participants made were also examples of alternativity, since they used their lack of opportunities to engage with the curriculum and to collaborate with peers as a basis for the types of activities they wanted to provide their students.

Gay (2000, 2002) described the inclusion of peer collaboration as a teaching strategy as being aligned with the interactional styles of many cultural groups. Promoting student learning through collaboration has also been supported in research on culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995). Additionally, Ladson-Billings explained that students should be expected to teach and take responsibility for each other. Olivia agreed,

> I think the students can learn a lot from each other. I think that the teacher sets up the environment and then the students can talk and explore and discover things for

> themselves. In my classroom, I want to be, I don't want to be like the boss or the leader and when I talk, they listen or that I'm the only one who knows anything. I think it is important for kids to talk to each other because they can use language that they understand, maybe better than I can explain sometimes. (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006)

Another participant, Michelle, agreed that it was important for her first grade students to collaborate during her lessons and described this collaboration as "a learning opportunity" for all students. She explained her reasons for encouraging peer discussion and collaboration and the connection to how students learn in this way,

> Another positive thing about group work is it brings different options and different ideas to the table and the students can work together. It builds communication skills too; the students have to learn to compromise and vocalize their thoughts and opinions…I think just basically whenever they're doing experiments just the things that they say, every student is learning from each other; every comment is a learning opportunity. (Michelle, interview, January 29, 2007)

An example of how peer collaboration was used in practice came from Kaci, who explained how the first grade students during her second-semester internship worked together during writers' workshop,

> There was a lot of discussion. That was a big part, especially for writing. They were supposed to rely on their partner and they called their partner their teacher, their writing teacher, so they were supposed to say, "I can't think of a story idea. Can you help me?" or "I'm writing this and I don't know how to end this story, can you help me?" So they're really relying on their partner. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

Two of the participants, Brenna and Brittany, explained a peer collaboration strategy they used when teaching that encouraged students to discuss ideas presented to the class. In this strategy, students turn to a partner and share their ideas about a question before sharing their ideas in front of the class as a whole. Brittany felt an advantage of this strategy was "that everyone gets a chance to at least share their opinions or thoughts or answers" with another member of the classroom community (Brittany, interview,

December 6, 2006). In the excerpt that follows, Brenna explained how the strategy is used during her teaching and why she felt it was important,

> I try to give them a chance to work in groups of some kind every time I teach a lesson. I think it's important. If I'm doing a read aloud, at one point during my read aloud I like to do where they turn to a partner and share and then come back. And then I like to say, "Tell me what your partner said about this." I try to get it in every lesson, because I think it is so important. When they work in groups, sometimes [their] friends can explain it better to [them] than I can. I think it's awesome to work to groups. I try to have the groups from different levels so they can learn from each other; they can support each other. (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006)

As previously discussed, the importance of having all students make contributions to the learning of the community and the alignment of peer collaboration and discussion with the interactional styles of many cultural groups has been emphasized in the work of Gay (2000, 2002) and Ladson-Billings (1994a, 1995). However, the participants did not discuss how they used peer collaboration and discussion as a way to respond to the interactional styles of their diverse students. They talked about peer collaboration and discussion, as well as providing students with active learning experiences and hands-on activities, as though it was how children learned based on their own experiences and preferences as learners (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992).

The final consideration the pre-service teachers used to create lessons that supported their beliefs about how students learn was to include material and topics that aligned with students' interests. For example, Sarah shared,

> I definitely listen to what [the students are] talking about and figure out what is interesting to them and just off of their lead. I try to listen to what they are interested in so I can find some way they are going to relate to whatever topic. (Sarah, interview, December 5, 2006)

Michelle, who completed her apprentice teaching in a first grade classroom, also described her consideration of students' interests in her planning as a way to help motivate students,

> I kind of try making a connection with what they're interested in to get them engaged with the lesson. I think if they're interested and it shows a connection to their interests then they'll be more able and motivated to learn something that's new to them. (Michelle, interview, January 29, 2007)

Amy worked closely with her cooperating teacher and her students to develop lessons based on the students' interests. Her first grade students often made suggestions for activities that Amy and her cooperating teacher incorporated into their lessons. Amy explained,

> The students will usually tell us when they have computers on Friday different programs they want to work on. There is this one program…and they make different kind of quilts on there using squares and triangles. They told us they would like to make their own quilts, so we took that and did it with construction paper, you know, they cut and [pasted] the paper to make the quilts. So that was an idea that they gave us. We were more than happy to do it, and they had a good time doing it. (Amy, interview, February 16, 2007)

Amy continued by explaining that if students were not interested in what she was teaching, then they "would not learn anything." Based on this belief, Amy often turned to her students and their suggestions when planning for instruction, as the example above illustrates.

While Ladson-Billings (1994a, 1995) advocated for incorporating ideas students were interested in and found meaningful when making decisions about instruction, these decisions were rooted in the students' culture, which was used "as a vehicle for learning" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 161). For example, a teacher used her students' interest and familiarity with rap music as a bridge to understanding and writing poetry (Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995). Gay (2002) also encouraged the use of "pedagogical bridges" that integrate "ethnic and cultural diversity into the most fundamental and high-status" subject

areas, such as mathematics, science, reading, and writing (p. 113). The bridges between culture and these high-status school subjects "connect prior knowledge with new knowledge, the known with the unknown, and abstractions with lived realities" (p. 113), or personal and cultural knowledge with mainstream academic or school knowledge (Banks, 1993).

For many of the participants in this study, little attention was given to interests rooted in their students' culture as they shared their beliefs about how students learn in a diverse early childhood classroom. Brooke said,

> I try to think about…what they are interest in and what they already know about and what they want to learn about. They're very vocal about saying what they already know and asking all types of questions…That's some of the most fun things to hear about – how they think and the questions they ask and then you go off of that. If you have something planned and they are going off [on another topic], I'm going to let them explore that. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Although she was unable to provide an example of how she had done this, the following excerpt from an interview with Brenna suggested she attempted to use the home culture as a pedagogical bridge to connect personal and cultural knowledge and experiences with new (school) knowledge (Banks, 1993),

> I think if you get to know the family and the students and their lives and what they're interested in, you can pull in a lot from there. Because I think if you really want to make your classroom and your curriculum student guided, you have to pull in that, those things. Because I think that's the basis for it. (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006)

By focusing on their beliefs about how students learn, and describing these beliefs in terms of their learning experiences and preferences, the participants' attention to multicultural education and diversity in both their planning and instruction was limited to areas where multicultural education and developmentally appropriate practices overlapped. This included providing students with active learning experiences, opportunities for peer collaboration and discussion, and lessons based on the interests of

their students. However, providing students with these experiences as a way to make learning culturally relevant was not found within their responses. Their beliefs about how students learn were strongly connected to the participants' beliefs about their role in the classroom, the focus of the next sub-theme.

Beliefs about Teaching

Included in the participants' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms were their beliefs about the role of the teacher in the classroom. The participants' beliefs about the role of the teacher were aligned with their beliefs about how students learn. As seen with the participants' beliefs about how students learn, their beliefs about the role of the teacher in a diverse early childhood classroom were closely tied to the role of the teacher as outlined by *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). According to developmentally appropriate practice, the teacher should facilitate experiences that allow students to construct their own knowledge, to collaborate with peers, and to solve their own problems; the participants in this study expressed similar ideas. This is in contrast to previous research that has suggested that for many pre-service teachers, teaching is a process of telling and transmitting knowledge to students (e.g., Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Hollingsworth, 1989; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Joram & Gabriele, 1998). One way the participants talked about the role of the teacher was as a facilitator of learning. Liz, who completed her apprentice teaching in a second ground classroom, emphasized this aspect of the teachers' role in student learning,

> I think that I am a facilitator to their learning. I want them to learn with hands-on [activities] and do things and see things click and go, "Oh, this is why this works." I'm there to help, but I'm not going to stand in front of the classroom and go, "This is how you do this." I want them to be helpful to one another. It's been really cool to see them work together. (Liz, interview, March 8, 2007)

This was important for Liz, because it kept her from "chasing 18 kids around the classroom trying to tell them the answers." As research has shown, teachers in the early stages of their careers are more focused on concerns with self rather than expressing concerns about their students (Fuller, 1969). For Liz, her interest in having her students work together was as much for her as it was for her students.

Emma, the only participant completing her apprentice teaching in a third grade classroom, agreed that the teacher should be the facilitator in the classroom,

> I think at this age it is helpful to model things and let them try it on their own…And as far as the teachers' role, really just being the facilitator. They don't want everything to be spoon-fed; they want an example given, but they don't want you to tell them exactly how to do it or what order. They want to read it for themselves and see if they can handle it on their own. (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007)

For many of the participants, their belief about the teacher as the facilitator of learning was connected to their observations of their cooperating teachers. Brenna shared, "I think the students should guide. I think the teacher is just the facilitator of the learning. I don't think it is our job to sit there and dictate at all" (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006). She continued, "This is definitely something I see my [cooperating teacher] do over and over…She lets them guide it. Our kids are used to it now so they ask the questions and they really do take it [the lesson] where it needs to go." For Brenna, watching her cooperating teacher was a sufficient basis for her teaching. This was similar to research on pre-service teachers who were more interested in "teaching actions that 'work' and they could possibly use for their own lessons" (Zanting et al., 2003, p. 207) and less interested in the beliefs or the decision-making underlying the practices.

Other participants emphasized their desire to help guide students toward independence. Sarah explained, "I really think the teacher should be there to help guide [the students] to be independent. I really don't think I need to be too dominating in the

conversations" (Sarah, December 5, 2006). In fact, it was independence that was Sarah's main focus as she planned for instruction,

> What I want the kids to do most is become independent. I want them to learn it themselves versus me teaching it. So when I try to create a lesson, I think about how can they do it themselves and what are they going to pull from the lesson…I just want them to be independent at the task at hand and independent in thinking it through. (Sarah, interview, December 5, 2006)

Olivia also stressed the importance of teachers "encouraging students to be independent," (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006). Another participant, Kaci, agreed that part of her role in the classroom was to guide her students toward independence, "I think promoting a lot of independence is important, too. So teaching them how to solve their own problems; teaching them how to work independently" (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006). Kaci explained this was a "practical" decision since she "can't be everywhere at once," more than a decision based on her beliefs about children's needs.

As found in the participants' beliefs about how students learn, the participants focused on aspects of the teachers' role that were aligned with *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), such as facilitating learning and promoting independence. Instead of basing these beliefs on their preferences as students, as found in the participants' beliefs about how students learn, their beliefs about teaching were based on practices they had seen that "worked" for their cooperating teachers, or practical reasons, such as not being able to attend to all students at the same time.

The participants' beliefs about the role of the teacher differed significantly from the teachers' roles as outlined by the various approaches to multicultural education. Some of these roles include helping students understand the ways in which knowledge is influenced by personal assumptions and experience (Banks, 1993); empowering students to take action toward a more democratic society (Sleeter & Grant, 1994); helping students maintain their ethnic identity (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994a); connecting students'

home knowledge and culture with what they are learning in school (Gonzalez et al., 1995; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Moll et al., 1992; Moll et al., 1993; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Vélez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992); and helping students understand how race has been constructed by and is a reflection of social, historical, and economic contexts (Banks, 1995). One area the participants included in their beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms that overlapped with both developmentally appropriate practices (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) and approaches to multicultural education (Blizek, 1999; Gay, 2000, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995) was the importance of building a classroom community.

Beliefs about Classroom Community

The final component of developmentally appropriate practice the participants highlighted was building a classroom community. When describing the need to build a classroom community, the participants emphasized two things: a caring community, for some of the participants this included parents and families; and a learning community. According to the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices, the early childhood classroom is a caring community that is inclusive and is a place where all children are valued and are taught "to respect and acknowledge differences in abilities and talents and to value each person for his or her strengths" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 16). Additionally, developmentally appropriate teachers value their students by bringing "each child's home culture and language into the shared culture of the school so that children feel accepted and gain a sense of belonging" (p. 163). Gay (2000) emphasized the caring relationship between teachers and students. She believed cultural caring places "teachers in an ethical, emotional, and academic partnership with ethnically diverse students, a partnership that is anchored in respect, honor, integrity, resource sharing, and a deep belief in the possibility of transcendence" (p. 52). For many of the

participants, devoting one-on-one time to students was an important way to connect with students, to show them they cared, and to build a caring community. Sarah explained,

> I think I do a fairly good job at this. They're all amazing in their own right so I love listening to them. It's not even something that I'm trying to do; it's just something that happens very naturally for me. I really want to know them. They're fascinating, and they all have interesting stories, so I think that's easy for me. (Sarah, interview, December 5, 2006)

For other pre-service teachers, taking the time during other parts of the school day, such as lunch and recess, was another opportunity to spend individual time with students they were willing to take advantage of. Ariel said, "They love me eating lunch with them and just sitting on the floor with them" (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006). Kaci explained why this time with students was important,

> Just a lot of individual talk is really helpful for all the kids are so they can see that I value who they are as a person and not just as a student. And it really was easy; we talk about it a lot and class and a lot of girls think it's so hard to talk to the kids individually because they don't have time, but going out with them on the playground and just talking with them…And talking to their family, meeting little brothers and sisters; it was just an easy way to get to know them. I think that was the most effective, when they could see that I cared about them as an entire person and their likes and dislikes and stuff. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

For Kaci, developing caring relationships with her students was based on "the kinds of teachers [she] had,"

> When they cared about me as a whole person, I learned so much more that way….They really did think of me as a whole person and not just a student and, you know, forgetting about me at the end of the day. So I think that's where a lot of that comes from. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

Brittany also discussed a caring community based on her experiences as a student. She explained that caring was "one of the reasons [she] went into teaching" (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006). Her family had lived in the United States for a couple of years when Brittany began school, so communication between home and school proved difficult. She shared, "I was struggling, but nobody could help…I want to help all of my

students feel wanted and valued in the classroom." Based on these experiences, Brittany believed building caring relationships with students was an important part of teaching,

> Forming relationships is something that is very important to me. And that I enjoy! For the past year and a half, I have spent most of my lunches eating with my students. I try to talk to my students about their lives every chance I get…waiting for their parents to pick them up, while I am greeting them in the morning, reading things from their work, walking to another area, and even at recess if I can. (Brittany, electronic response, April 7, 2007)

For other pre-service teachers, part of the caring community extended to building relationships with parents and families. The funds of knowledge approach to multicultural education (Gonzalez et al., 1995; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Moll et al., 1992; Moll et al., 1993; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Vélez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992) emphasized connecting home knowledge and culture with what children are learning in school. Teachers who spend time studying household knowledge have access to the rich cognitive knowledge that families have developed over time and will use to navigate future experiences. As a result of spending time with families and understanding these cultural funds of knowledge, the teachers were better able to engage students in school by providing experiences that were more meaningful. Early childhood educators have been described as having one of the following philosophies about parents and families that influence their practice: families as victims, families as a necessary evil, families as consumers, and families as partners (McWilliam, McMillen, Sloper, & McMillen, 1997). The philosophy of families as partners most closely aligns with the funds of knowledge approach. The participants who discussed building relationships with parents and families emphasized using "parents as resources" as they helped students meet academic goals. According to Brooke,

> This is the first semester where I've seen the parents consistently; everyday, and I really get to talk to them about their children and their progress, which I've enjoyed. It's so nice when you can use those parents as resources and help. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

McWilliam et al. (1997) described the "families as victims" philosophy as the belief "that parents need to be properly educated in order to meet the needs of their children" (p. 67). This philosophy was illustrated by Olivia, who believed that "a collaborative effort between the school, the teacher, the student, and the family" was needed for students to be successful in the classroom. She continued, "You can't force support at home, but you can encourage support and give parents the ideas and the resources that they need. All parents want their child to be successful" (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006). Kaci also discussed working in partnership with the parents of her students, although her emphasis was on the connection between learning at home and at school,

> I do like to think that I work as a partner with their parents, because they do come in with things that they've already learned from their families and they'll learn a lot more if what I'm teaching can go home with them. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

Brenna believed that one of her cooperating teacher's strengths was her commitment to helping parents and families "feel very welcome in her classroom and feel like they can play a part" in their child's education. Since Brenna completed both her second-semester internship and her apprentice teaching in the same classroom, she was able to observe how her cooperating teacher established this relationship with her students' parents and maintained the relationship throughout the year. She explained,

> From the first time we met them at Meet the Teacher, she's like, "My door is always open." Her big this is, "You are your child's first and foremost teacher. I'm here to learn from you so together we can help your child succeed." She really makes them feel that they know more about their child than she does and I think they appreciate that. She's very open and she's very non-judgmental. I think they feel very welcome in her classroom and feel like they can play a part. (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006)

Brenna reported "100% parent participation" on take-home projects and "nothing but positive interactions with the parents I've met" (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006). Brenna's descriptions of her experiences with the parents and families in her placement

classrooms reflected her cooperating teachers' beliefs and attitude toward parents. Researchers have written about the significance of the cooperating teacher and the influence she or he has on the apprentice teacher. In a study that asked pre-service teachers to rank difference sources in order of influence, the cooperating teacher came in second only to student teaching itself (Su, 1992).

Another way the pre-service teachers discussed the classroom community was as a community of learners. Similar to research by Ladson-Billings (1994a) and Gay (2000, 2002), these pre-service teachers believed all members of the community should be responsible for helping each other succeed. Amanda described how the first grade students during her internship helped each other succeed,

> When there was a student who didn't understand something, I was so amazed by how the students would go to each other a lot of the time. I mean, yes they would ask me too, but if they didn't understand something, they would ask a friend at their table, "How can I do this? Will you help me do this?" And they wouldn't just give them the answer; they'd actually sit there with them and help them through it. (Amanda, interview, December 6, 2006)

Based on her observations of a teaching practice that worked, Amanda had found a practice she wanted to implement in her own classroom. However, similar to research by Zanting et al. (2003), she was unable to articulate the "cognitions underlying [the] teaching" (p. 207). Pam also described her interest in building a community of learners based on classroom observations. However, the classroom was a college course in which Pam had been enrolled,

> I took a class last semester, and we had this introduction and it created this community of learners…It was a project about us and it just created this community of learners that you don't see in other classes. I would certainly take an idea like that and implement it in my classroom. For example, maybe the first two weeks, we can just talk about ourselves, where we come from, how we learn, what is important to us – things like that…It's so much more different than going into a class for the first time and just looking because you don't know who your peers are…So, just establishing that and having them learn about each other initially would probably create this kind of community where the kids can learn

> from each other and bring in their own experiences and enhance their knowledge. (Pam, interview, February 13, 2007)

Similar to Amanda, Pam had seen a practice that "worked" and wanted to implement it in her classroom, even though she was unable to articulate the philosophy underlying this teaching practice.

Based on Jane's observations that her first grade students were having trouble working collaboratively, she developed a lesson to help build teamwork and community,

> We did a building project. I read a book, *Swimmy*, and how they worked together. It was a two-day lesson. They were trying to build the tallest tower, but that wasn't the main goal of it; it was to teach them to work together. We gave them straws and marshmallows to built it. They had to discuss it with their group and decide on jobs. I would walk around and if I saw they were working as a team and using teamwork language, I would give them more supplies….We debriefed afterward, and they weren't so concerned about if they got the tallest tower. They really took the teamwork and the community aspect out of it. (Jane, interview, December 11, 2006)

When describing the classroom as a community of learners, the participants did not emphasize how this community of learners could support group interactions and communication styles of different cultural groups (Banks, 1993; Gay, 2000, 2002) or help students "acquire an ethic of success" (Gay, 2000, p. 30). Instead, the participants focused on how a community of learners supported their beliefs about how students learn. In addition, their emphasis on building a classroom community was based on their experiences as students and their observations of classroom communities that "worked." The participants were unable to describe the underlying philosophy that had guided their cooperating teachers' or professors' decisions in creating a community.

Summary

The participants' beliefs about how students learn, the role of the teacher, and the importance of building a classroom community aligned with elements of multicultural education only where the beliefs overlapped with developmentally appropriate practices.

A key component of Nieto's (2000) definition of multicultural education that was missing from the responses of the participants in this study was an awareness of the need for a more critical pedagogy. While the participants were concerned with meeting the interests and academic needs of their students as they planned for instruction, they did not question whether or not what they were teaching their students was meaningful for or relevant to the diverse students in their classroom. Instead, they focused on how the curriculum was presented to their students based on their beliefs about how students learn and the type of classroom community created.

When explaining their beliefs, the participants emphasized their experiences and preferences as students (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992), since they believed these experiences and preferences were prototypical (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991). As found in research on the professional development of teachers (Fuller, 1969), some participants based decisions on what practices would keep them from having to "be all over the place" (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006). In other words, at times the participants' attention was focused inward on their needs as a developing teacher rather than outward on what would be best for their students. Additionally, the participants focused on observed practices that "worked." As other researchers have shown, the participants were more interested in how other teachers – including their cooperating teachers and university professors – taught, rather than "exploring the cognitions underlying their teaching" (Zanting et al., 2003, pl. 207). As I will explore in the following theme, Marginalizing Multicultural Education, the practices the participants observed that "worked," both in their field placement classrooms and in classrooms when they were in elementary, middle, and high school, reinforced approaches to multicultural education that result in its marginalization in early childhood classrooms.

THEME TWO: MARGINALIZING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

> Too many teachers and teacher educators think that their subjects (particularly math and science) and cultural diversity are incompatible, or that combining them is too much of a conceptual and substantive stretch for their subjects to maintain disciplinary integrity. This is simply not true. There is a place for cultural diversity in every subject taught in schools.
>
> Gay, 2002, p. 107

The participants in this study did not see the "place for cultural diversity in every subject taught in schools" (p. 107). As explored in the first theme, the participants focused on developmentally appropriate practices when describing their planning and instruction in diverse early childhood classrooms during field placements. The majority of the participants did not approach the topic of diversity until I asked specifically about the role of the teacher in helping students connect to their racial and cultural identities. Through their responses, the participants shared their beliefs about multicultural education and its place in the early childhood classroom. As I will describe in this second theme, the participants believed multicultural education was something that could be added to the existing curriculum (Banks, 2004), but only for certain students in certain grades at certain times of the year. Included within the theme of Marginalizing Multicultural Education are the following sub-themes: what multicultural education includes; where multicultural education belongs; and who needs multicultural education.

What Multicultural Education Includes

One way the participants in this study marginalized multicultural education was limiting what it included. Although the participants provided definitions of diversity that included race, language, socio-economic status, religion, family structure, and gender among other factors (see Table 3.1), their definitions of multicultural education were limited to two of these components of diversity: religious holidays and language. As a

result, the participants provided descriptions of multicultural education that were limited to discussing holidays and languages other than English in the classroom. Ladson-Billings (1994b) criticized this approach to multicultural education because it "conveys the idea that diversity issues come into play only during celebratory moments with foods, fun, and festivals" (p. 23). Their explanations of multicultural education in their teaching were reminiscent of the contributions approaches offered by Banks (2004) in his discussion about approaches to curriculum reform. In the contributions approach, teachers focus on special events, such as holidays, cultural practices, or cultural heroes, without altering the existing curriculum. An example of the contributions approach to multicultural education was found in the following excerpt from my interview with Kaci. She explained,

> Well, even just in talking to the kids, we would talk about their holidays. I knew one of the students was going to celebrate Eid and so I [asked] her to talk about it. Some of the students around us didn't know what that was and so I said, "Can you tell them what Eid is? They're curious; they want to know." And other holidays that are celebrated like Yom Kippur. It was really just an open dialogue where they could talk about it. So if they were going to celebrate one and be gone from school they could say, "Oh, I'm not going to be here tomorrow because it's Yom Kippur." [They would talk] about why they were going to be gone and what they were going to do. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

Brooke provided another example of how multicultural education was limited to the celebration of holidays. She shared,

> We try to do as much as we can. We just did Chinese New Year last week. The kids love it. We have a little boy from Korea, it was also the Korean New Year, and he was very excited to tell us what his family did. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Hailey emphasized the discussion of African-Americans in her classroom during Black History Month,

> Last week, I was really interested, because it's Black History Month and we were going to do something, but we never got to it. Maybe we will get to it next week. …She [the cooperating teacher] was going to do a timeline of different events

> about people that were black. I don't really know what she was going to do with it, but the kids were going to make a timeline. (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007)

In addition to holidays, the discussion of languages other than English was included in the participants' descriptions of multicultural education. By adding multiple languages to classroom discussions, the participants felt they were demonstrating that they valued the cultures of the students in their classrooms. In an interview with Brenna, she talked about the use of Spanish with her second graders,

> I know Spanish. It's my minor so…sometimes we talk in Spanish. Like if we're doing a read aloud, I know of one student in particular, he'll inform us of what it is in Spanish or how you say this in Spanish. Vocabulary and phrases and then we'll say it together and it's fun…I try to when I'm teaching, I try to bring in their culture any way that I can, because I think it's so important. So important. (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006)

Similarly, Brittany emphasized the importance of valuing her students' culture by learning to say phrases in multiple languages.

> I'm really interested in my students as people, so their culture, obviously, is a big part of that. So I like being able to talk about it. So learning to how to say different things in different languages, especially like hello or goodbye. (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006)

Multiple languages were included in songs in some of the participants' early childhood classrooms. Brooke talked about the songs sung in her kindergarten classroom,

> We sing songs in different languages. We were learning some Chinese on Chinese New Year. They love singing the days of the week and the months of the year in Spanish. The helper of the day gets to lead it. Well, there are two helpers of the day, but one leads it in English and one leads it in Spanish. Sometimes it's a big debate [about] who gets to lead the Spanish, because they think it's more fun. A lot of our kids do speak it and it's a more common language for us to speak. I do know my numbers 1 to 10. I can do that with them. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Although Brooke and Kaci shared practices that limited multicultural education to a focus on holidays, they expressed concern over this practice. According to Kaci, "I

think it would be a horrible disservice to my students to present only the stereotypes about a culture because that could potentially cause more harm than good" (Kaci, electronic response, February 1, 2007). Brooke remembered her teachers in elementary and junior high school approaching multicultural education in a similar and limited way, "I remember in elementary school, and maybe in junior high even, there would be like one afternoon a week where you did some sort of activity about different cultures…but it was very, it seemed very forced" (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007). This awareness of the need to move beyond the "foods, fun, and festivals" (Ladson-Billings, 1994b, p. 23) coupled with the lack of other models of multicultural education in the participants' schooling experiences is detailed further in the final theme of this chapter, Shifting and Unstable Beliefs.

Where Multicultural Education Belongs

As the quote by Gay (2002) that introduced this theme suggested, one of the participants believed that multicultural education was reserved for particular subject areas. For Ariel, this was a reflection of the subjects she had (and had not) been given the opportunity to teach. She explained,

> To be honest, [diversity] hasn't been one of my main focuses at all. I guess, when I'm doing a lesson, as far as the lesson planning goes, I just follow a template and made modifications for students, but as far as taking their culture into account, that hasn't really happened yet. I think the lessons that I've done, in general, [culture] hasn't really been a factor. (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2007)

While none of the other participants provided a similar reason for the inclusion or exclusion of multicultural education in their practice, they shared practices that reserved multicultural education for certain students, certain times of the year, and certain parts of the lesson. In this sub-theme, I will explore how the participants marginalized multicultural education by limiting where multicultural education belonged.

In his discussion of the approaches to curriculum reform, Banks (2004) described the additive approach to multicultural education as an approach that adds new "content, concepts, themes, and perspectives" (p. 15) as a way to enrich the existing the curriculum without making changes to the structure of the curriculum. Not only was multicultural education seen as something that was added to the district-provided curriculum, but for some of the participants, the time multicultural education subtracted from time available in the classroom was highlighted. In her discussion of Chinese New Year and President's Day, Brooke emphasized the time these cultural events took away from the time available for the kindergarten curriculum,

> We just did Chinese New Year last week...We had that and we had President's Day, so it took our week down to talking about whatever our unit was on. But I felt like it was more important to take that opportunity to talk about these other things. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

In Hailey's description of the timeline of famous African Americans her students were going to create for Black History Month, she shared, "They were going to touch on it, but not go over it too much" (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007). Thus, little attention was going to be placed on diversity, with the majority of the day spent on activities centered around mainstream academic knowledge (Banks, 1993).

Other participants described discussions of holidays, languages, and cultural symbols as an afterthought to their lessons. For example, Liz described how she could incorporate flags from other countries as a review at the end of a lesson on the Texas flag,

> You know, if we were talking about the Texas flag, then maybe we talk about other flags from other countries. You know, just at the end to review. We have some Hispanic students and some Vietnamese students and we could talk about their flags. (Liz, interview, March 8, 2007)

Another example of how multicultural education was marginalized was found in the following quote from Michelle. She explained how she would include food and language as a "simple way to value the students' heritage and language,"

> Just have them bring in food and just explain important values about their culture. I mean, just another simple way to value the students' heritage and language. And maybe have them teach the class greetings at calendar time: "This is how we say hello in Spanish" and stuff like that. That could be easily done, in like two minutes. (Michelle, interview, January 29, 2007)

The descriptions that Liz and Michelle provided pointed to the limited amount of time that would be devoted to these hypothetical activities. Liz emphasized that these activities would be included at the end of a lesson, and Michelle emphasized the limited amount of time she would devote to this activity.

Some of the participants marginalized multicultural education through their belief that it "belonged" to certain grade levels. These participants felt their students were too young to recognize difference, so multicultural education was not necessary. Hailey explained multicultural education's absence from her teaching based on the ages of the students with whom she had worked,

> Not yet, because I've worked with a lot of the lower grades. I've worked with kindergarten and first and now I'm in second. I don't know if they really understand everything, but I could see something coming up in the older grades. (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007)

Brittany also felt certain discussions were reserved for students of an "appropriate" age. She shared, "When the age is appropriate, I was always sharing stories about the Vietnam War from my parents' point of view – something so powerful that you probably would not be able to find in books" (Brittany, electronic response, April 7, 2007). Olivia expressed similar thoughts: "In the younger grades it might be hard for them to actually understand about different cultures" (Olivia, electronic response, December 6, 2006). Many pre-service and in-service teachers question whether or not young children notice race. Despite this colorblind myth, young children are aware of race (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006; Ramsey, 2004; Tatum, 1997). In fact, around the age of three or four, "most children have a rudimentary concept of race and can easily identify, match, and

label people by racial group" (Ramsey, 2004, p. 78). This awareness coupled with images of racial groups as portrayed by the media (Tatum, 1997) can lead to children absorbing these distorted and stereotypical images and beliefs about race as they grow up.

The participants' beliefs about where multicultural education belongs were strongly connected to and limited by their definitions of what multicultural education included. If teachers, both in-service and pre-service, are going to see the "place for cultural diversity in every subject taught in schools" (Gay, 2002, p. 107), then their beliefs about what terms such as "diversity," "culture," and "multicultural education" include will need to be expanded. In turn, this will help them see multicultural education as being for all students.

Who Needs Multicultural Education

Whites have often questioned their role in multicultural education, particularly White teachers questioning the appropriateness of engaging White children and their families in multicultural education (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006). While many teachers have recognized that discrimination affects Whites by creating "a false sense of racial superiority [that] is damaging, causes isolation, and ill prepares children to function in a diverse society" (p. 1), others continue to believe that multicultural education is not relevant in classrooms where the children are predominantly White. The majority of the participants in this study held this latter belief. Therefore, another way multicultural education was marginalized by the participants was through their belief that it was only for particular groups of students. As previously mentioned, the discussion of who "needed" multicultural education was limited to whether or not the participants' students were of minority racial backgrounds. One reason the participants provided for ignoring multicultural education was the lack of a majority minority in their classrooms. Brooke explained,

> There really hasn't been that much about, um, diversity, maybe more so in other cohorts who are a lot in east Austin. I've talked to girls in that cohort. I know that they probably talk about that more. I was talking to a girl [in another cohort] who said, "I'm the only white person in my class and my kids love to talk about it." I know I haven't had that experience and I know most people in my cohort haven't. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Emma did not believe the district curriculum needed to be changed, since the majority of her students were Caucasian,

> I mean, it's hard to say, I haven't really been stuck, not stuck, but in a position where that much has needed to be changed or there's been a need for a big difference. I've always been in an environment where the majority is homogeneous; so it's really been the diverse population has been the exception rather than the rule. So, I probably have incorporated it in little ways, but nothing so major that it really sticks out. But it would be interesting to get in one year, one grade and see what you would do. But as of right now, I haven't had a need. (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007)

In her response to a question about what elements of multicultural education she had included in her second grade classroom, Hailey replied, "None really, because I mean at this school, there is diversity, but it's not to the extreme like some of the schools. I mean, it's a lower amount of diverse" (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007). For these participants, diversity was seemingly a question of the presence of students considered a racial minority. In schools where there was an "overwhelming presence of Whiteness" (Sleeter, 2001), the participants reported a reduced need for multicultural education. This was particularly true in schools where the students came from families the participants described as higher in socio-economic status (SES). According to Brittany,

> I guess as you move up in the SES, you tend to be more Americanized. Like even as my family has moved up, we've become a lot more Americanized than we were say, a couple of years ago when we were only speaking Vietnamese and only eating Vietnamese food. (Brittany, interview, April 5, 2007)

While half of the students in her classroom were of an Asian or a Latino background, Brittany had this to say about the diversity in her classroom, "Well, I don't think our classroom is *that* diverse" (Brittany, interview, April 5, 2007). For Brittany, diversity was

an individual characteristic that was based upon the degree to which individuals had been Americanized. For example, Brittany said she did not think her brother was that diverse, because "he can probably only say fork and spoon in Vietnamese and that's about it" (Brittany, interview, April 5, 2007). Brittany believed she was more diverse than her brother, but not as diverse as a student in her classroom whose family had recently moved to the United States from Korea and who spoke limited English. Therefore, her focus was on this one "diverse" student, so multicultural education was not as necessary as it would be if there was a higher presence of "diverse" students.

Some of the participants shifted the responsibility of providing multicultural education to the students themselves. For these participants, multicultural education was for those who took advantage of "opportunities" to address their race and culture. When asked to describe the ways in which she valued the diversity of students in her classroom, Emma replied,

> I feel like they get a lot of chances in the work that they do to show who they are; they get to pick what they want to write about. A lot of times they have a lot of chances to pick subjects, like what they want to write about or what they want to read about, even during free time. So I feel like their preferences are definitely taken into account. (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007)

Michelle provided a similar response when describing the value of hearing the perspectives of all her students. She said, "Having every child say what they want to say kind of allows the students, I guess, to show their backgrounds and the diversity" (Michelle, interview, January 29, 2007). These quotes suggest that it is up to the student to make the space for multiple perspectives to be heard in the classroom. Brooke provided a similar response,

> Every morning we have a time where they can talk and share…If they are the helper of the day, they can bring in two things from home, sometimes it's just a stuffed animal, but sometimes it's something from their family and they can talk about that. And when they do bring in something that's not just a toy, we will talk about that and so that's really neat. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Pam described a similar experience, though it was one she had in school, where she had to initiate a discussion of her culture,

> The first time that I addressed my culture was a project that I did. It was a topic that I chose, and other than that it was never; it was never really addressed. That was in 5th grade and I did a project about India and that was really the only time we ever really discussed my culture or where I came from. It was nice to have that, but I really wish I had that earlier and I wish I had that a little bit more. (Pam, interview, February 13, 2007)

By making the students responsible for their diverse voices to be heard, the participants shifted responsibility to the very students others believe are too young to recognize color or difference. In addition, they avoided taking responsibility for the inclusion of multiple perspectives. When asked whether or not their young students took these opportunities to "show their backgrounds and the diversity" (Michelle, interview, January 29, 2007), these participants all replied "not really." As a result, these participants ensured that "a Eurocentric curriculum" (Banks, 2001, p. 172) would continue to be the singular voice heard in their classrooms.

Another way the participants marginalized multicultural education was by valuing academic knowledge and experiences over the knowledge and experiences the children brought with them from home. Therefore, multicultural education was for students who "needed" the knowledge privileged in schools. As a result, multicultural education became a means of accommodating instruction to "give them the knowledge that they need to succeed in the lesson" (Michelle, interview, January 29, 2007). While the participants described the importance of the students' prior knowledge – the knowledge they brought with them from home to school – as they planned for instruction, they spoke of the need to compensate for this knowledge. Luis Moll and other researchers describe this knowledge as funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 1995; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Moll et al., 1992; Moll et al., 1993; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Vélez-Ibañez & Greenberg,

1992). According to these researchers, funds of knowledge should be valued in schools and used as a basis for planning instruction that is meaningful and relevant for students. This is similar to Banks' (1993) notion of personal and cultural knowledge. When talking about the knowledge their students had brought with them from home, the participants did not always see it as something to be valued, but rather as a deficiency (Delpit, 1995) and something for which they needed to compensate. Sleeter and Grant (1994) described this as a characteristic of the teaching the exceptional and culturally different approach to multicultural education. While participants used an approach similar to funds of knowledge, they viewed it from a deficit perspective. They did not seek this information as a way to connect learning in school to their students' prior experiences and knowledge, but as a way to know what areas of the curriculum or their lessons they "may have to explain more than others." For example, in an interview with Olivia, she reflected on what she considers as she planned lessons for her first grade students,

> I think you have to think about the kids' prior knowledge and experiences, which could be different because different cultures have different beliefs or experiences. You can't expect everybody to come with the same knowledge. Some things you may have to explain more than others. (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006)

The belief that teachers have to compensate for the (lack of) prior knowledge and experiences of children was also found in comments by Michelle, who spoke about the diverse backgrounds of students in the kindergarten classroom where she completed her internship. She shared,

> Especially during my first semester [internship] where there was such a wide variety, I thought about things they were familiar with because there were a lot of kids from different households. I wanted to make sure that I was planning stuff that they were familiar with or that I provided a background of the information to them. Basically, I just adapt my lessons so that they can come in with the knowledge or if they don't have the knowledge, I adapt my lesson to give them the knowledge that they need to succeed in the lesson. (Michelle, interview, January 29, 2007)

The value of certain experiences and types of knowledge over others was also present in the following excerpt from my interview with Brooke. She said,

> Their knowledge comes from their families, what they do at home, and what we've talked about here at school. The books we read; the books they're reading at home. I've just seen what the difference of…the kids with so much prior knowledge and so many other experiences, so we want to make sure we give all of them…the kids who haven't had those experiences need to have them at school. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

If the teacher's emphasis is on mainstream academic knowledge or school knowledge (Banks, 1993), then Brooke is right: "the kids who haven't had those experiences need to have them at school." Brittany discussed that when students were "sharing their opinions, even if they might not be right, I try to twist it and make it right" (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006). While the participants recognized they needed to use the prior knowledge and experiences of their students when planning for instruction, a practice that was included in research on approaches to multicultural education (Gonzalez et al., 1995; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Moll et al., 1992; Moll et al., 1993; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Vélez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992), the participants included this practice as a way of determining who needed the knowledge valued in school, thereby using this approach in a way that is counter to its purpose and making the funds of knowledge approach to multicultural education a deficit notion. Their espoused practices were more aligned with the teaching the exceptional and culturally different approach to multicultural education (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). In this approach, the teacher uses their students' experiences and backgrounds to help fill gaps in knowledge and help students catch up to their peers. The students that teachers using this approach believe need catching up are typically from lower socio-economic backgrounds, racial minorities, or have limited English proficiency.

Summary

In this theme, I have described the ways in which the participants marginalized multicultural education. Based on the participants' understanding of multicultural education as the inclusion of holidays and languages other than English and accommodating instruction for the students who need it, they limited opportunities to connect the students' home and school lives. Their understanding of multicultural education was based largely on their experiences in school – as a student, as an intern, and as an apprentice teacher. As a result, the participants lacked a model of multicultural education in practice that was pervasive or important for all students, as proposed by Nieto (2000). The participants' understanding of multicultural education meant it was isolated to particular times of the year and for particular students.

Another way the participants in this study marginalized multicultural education was a result of misunderstanding approaches to multicultural education and their purposes. For example, the participants described what Moll and his colleagues would call funds of knowledge in a deficit way. Instead of using the students' funds of knowledge as a basis for instruction and as a way to connect the students' home and school lives, the participants emphasized how they use this information to compensate for what the children do not know and to determine what they need to teach, a practice aligned with the teaching the exceptional and culturally different approach to multicultural education (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). While the participants' prior beliefs and experiences were influential in their beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms and multicultural education, the participants described experiences that suggested these prior beliefs could be altered. I have described these experiences in the following theme.

THEME THREE: PROVIDING AN INTERRUPTION OF BELIEFS

> …the earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter, for these beliefs subsequently affect perception and strongly influence the processing of new information. It is for this reason that newly acquired beliefs are most vulnerable…The power of beliefs easily can outweigh the clearest and most convincing contrary evidence. People are often loath to engage in discussions that touch on what they feel are their most deeply held beliefs…but, when they do, they usually manage to survive the ordeal with preconceptions comfortably intact.
>
> Pajares, 1992, p. 317

The power of prior beliefs when learning to teach has been well documented in research (e.g., Anderson, 2001; Borko & Putnam, 1996; Calderhead, 1996; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Raths, 2001; Trotman & Kerr, 2001). Researchers have argued whether the prior beliefs of pre-service teachers can be altered through coursework and field placements during the teacher education program (e.g., Gill, Ashton, & Algina, 2004; Groulx, 2001; Hollingsworth, 1989, Joram & Gabriele, 1998) or if they remain stable (e.g., Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Nettle, 1998; Tillema, 2000). As Pajares (1992) suggested, beliefs that are newly acquired are the most vulnerable, since they are competing with belief systems that are influencing how these new beliefs are received and processed. Without experiences that challenge beliefs, prior beliefs are likely to remain stable (Nespor, 1987). Even in the face of "the clearest and most convincing contrary evidence" (Pajares, 1992, p. 317), prior beliefs can remain unchanged.

Many of the participants described experiences – some personal in nature; others connected to university coursework or field placements – that caused an interruption to their current way of thinking and challenged them to reconsider their previously held beliefs about teaching students of diverse backgrounds in their current and future classrooms. These experiences impacted the participants in a variety of ways as they

responded to this "convincing contrary evidence" (Pajares, 1992, p. 317) in light of their espoused prior beliefs. For some of the participants, their field placements and cooperating teachers supported these new beliefs, thus allowing the participants to reconsider and reexamine these altered beliefs in relationship to their evolving practice. For other participants, this "convincing contrary evidence" was isolated – not supported or readdressed in field placements or with cooperating teachers – and therefore did not have an impact on the participants during their field placements. Other participants did not believe their university coursework or field placements challenged their beliefs, but rather refined and solidified their previously held beliefs. Included within the theme of Providing an Interruption of Beliefs were the following sub-themes: seeing difference, confronting prejudices, observing teachers, and refining beliefs.

Seeing Difference

Although research dating back to Lasker's (1929) study of children's racial attitudes indicates that young children are aware of racial differences, early childhood teachers often question whether the young children they teach are aware of racial and ethnic differences. As a result, many early childhood teachers have adopted a "colorblind" approach to race and ethnicity in hopes of protecting the "racial and ethnic innocence" of young children (Banks, 1993, p. 237). In her book *White Teacher*, Vivian Gussin Paley (1979) described her experiences as a White teacher who worked to make her classroom "a fair place for every child who enters" (p. xv). Initially, Paley found it easier to pretend the African-American children who entered her class were White. This acknowledgement led her to the realization that she often avoided discussing other differences she observed in her children as well. This book was included in the responses of several of the participants as being pivotal in "forcing" them to rethink their previously

held belief that being colorblind was a way to show respect for all students. Olivia shared,

> I really liked that book [*White Teacher*] and it was the book that made me start thinking about you can't treat every child equal…I'm definitely glad he exposed us to that book because it really, it forced me to think about things that I thought well "yeah, you know, everybody should be treated equal," but you can't expect the same thing at school if people are having different experiences at home. (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006)

Before enrolling in State University, most of Olivia's schooling experiences were with students "who were just like me." Although her parents "made a point for [her] to experience differences outside the community," such as volunteering for Habitat for Humanity and soup kitchens, these differences were otherwise not talked about at home.

Conversations about difference were also absent from Olivia's field placements. Her descriptions of this silence focused on the treatment of language and holidays – the two most often mentioned "differences" in the participants' descriptions of multicultural education (see Marginalizing Multicultural Education). Although there were students speaking English as a second language in her first grade classroom, their first language was not recognized in the classroom since the children were "fluent English at school, so I haven't seen anything like that" (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006). While holidays were celebrated in her field placement classrooms, Olivia believed they focused on neutral aspects of the holidays, such as rabbits, pumpkins, and apples, as a way to avoid "something that might be offensive" to the students who did not celebrate the particular holidays recognized by her cooperating teachers. Although Olivia described the influence of *White Teacher* in helping her "to see color in her classroom," the absence of discussions about difference in her field placement classrooms left Olivia unsure about whether discussing difference with her students was offensive or something she should value. This is detailed further in the theme Shifting and Unstable Beliefs.

While there was racial diversity in Brooke's neighborhood and schools growing up, other factors meant that she attended classes with students from similar racial backgrounds. Brooke attributed her limited experiences with diversity as a child to two things: zoning and district lines in the small town where she lived and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. She explained,

> In my schooling, I really had a very limited experience with people who were different from me, especially in high school. The other high school in town was definitely more; it had a lot more diversity in it. So you take that, a smaller diverse population, and then you consider the AP courses, [which] were predominantly white. I don't think that's a good thing, but it happens a lot. There was still definitely a separation [by race]. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

At home, "there was never talk from my parents or family" about diversity or the racial separation Brooke experienced in school. The inclusion of the book *White Teacher* in one of her university courses was important for Brooke. She described how it changed her belief about having a colorblind stance,

> I remember in one of the books we read [*White Teacher*] it was, "Are you supposed to be colorblind?" Some teachers say, "I don't see color in my kids. It doesn't matter to me." It not mattering, that's a good thing, but to be colorblind is not a good thing because you are ignoring a huge part of this child and their home and their culture and their life…It made me think about it a lot more. In the class where they were talking about the books about being colorblind, you do have to think, "How do I feel about this?" At first I agreed with the not…you know, not caring if they're red, purple, green, you know some quote. And I was like, "Oh yeah, I don't care." But then you think about it and realize you are ignoring this part of this child… (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Brooke's experiences in her field placements were different than the ones described by Olivia, although her focus remained on language and holidays. In her internship in a pre-kindergarten classroom, Brooke recalled labeling "all around the classroom and we had it in four different languages and parents would volunteer and come in and talk about" their language and culture. The appreciation of languages other than English was reinforced in the kindergarten classroom where Brooke was completing her apprentice teaching.

Brooke described the conversation between her cooperating teacher and a parent during parent-teacher conferences,

> My teacher made sure to ask, "Is he still speaking his native language? We don't want him to lose that." So we had a discussion about that, and how it's important for the kids to, you know, it helps the kids if they are learning their native language and English at the same time. It's going to be a lot better for them in the end and hopefully help them keep both of the languages. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Parents of the students in her kindergarten classroom were involved in a variety of ways including "a parent who comes in and reads books in Spanish" and a parent who shared information about Chinese New Year. Brooke's field placement with cooperating teachers who addressed differences in the classroom led her to continue reexamining her beliefs and how she could include more than just "one afternoon a week were you did some sort of activity about different cultures" as she experienced in school. Although she felt her cooperating teacher included culture "throughout the day" in a way that is "a lot more integrated," Brooke still focused on the integration of language and holidays since she had not "seen any others," meaning any other approaches to multicultural education. I have described this further in the following theme, Shifting and Unstable Beliefs.

The participants who described the realization of the importance of seeing difference had varied experiences and beliefs prior to their enrollment at State University. However, there were two things these participants had in common – they lived in racially segregated cities or schools and conversations about diversity were kept silent among family and friends. They were raised to believe that being colorblind was how to respect people they encountered that were different from them. Once they began education coursework at State University, they learned, as Brooke said, that by ignoring color "you are ignoring a huge part of this child and their home and their culture and their life." While future experiences in their field placements limited some of the participants'

opportunities to continue reexamining their beliefs and apply their racial awareness, other participants' field placements provided them with opportunities to continue examining themselves as racial beings and learning how to respond in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways with the diverse students in their early childhood classrooms.

Confronting Prejudices

Researchers have written extensively of the negative attitudes and beliefs pre-service and in-service teachers have toward low-income students and children of color (e.g., Artiles et al., 1995; Bakari, 2003; Banks, 1994; Delpit, 1995; Horm, 2003; Raths, 2001; Sleeter, 2001; Townsend, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Winfield, 1986). These researchers have suggested that pre-service and in-service teacher education is necessary to challenge these beliefs. However, teachers are often resistant to engaging in discussions about diversity, inequity, stereotypes, and their own racial feelings (Banks, 1994; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Horm, 2003). Banks (1994) cautioned that this process can be painful "and, if not handled competently, can be destructive and unsettling" (p. 98). Although there are risks involved in this process, Banks emphasized "it is essential that teachers clarify their racial feelings before they can contribute positively to the reduction of racial prejudice in students and function effectively within a multiethnic setting" (pp. 98-99). In this sub-theme, I have highlighted the experiences of two of the participants as they confronted their prejudices.

When talking about her coursework at State University, Ariel recalled several conversations with professors about confronting prejudices. In one of her courses, she recalled the importance of "coming to terms" with your prejudices in connection to a discussion on discrimination. She shared, "I think that tied in a lot with knowing your students and their backgrounds and that was linked with knowing yourself and knowing the prejudices you have and coming to terms with it." She also recalled courses where the

emphasis was on "knowing who you are" and being aware the prejudices you have "for the future when you work with children" (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006). One area of education where many teachers, both pre-service and in-service, have a strong opinion is the level and type of involvement expected from families in their child's education. This was the focus for the participants in this study within the sub-theme of confronting prejudices. There are teachers who believe parents should do more to prepare their children for school; parents who believe it is the school's responsibility, and not their responsibility, to educate their children; teachers who want to work collaboratively with parents; and parents who wish teachers would keep them more involved and informed of their children's progress (Epstein, 1995). Pre-service teachers enter their teacher education programs with notions of family support based on their own experiences (Graue & Brown, 2003). Ariel recognized that some families, including her own, "push the responsibility of educating the children all on the teacher." When Ariel was in school,

> I know personally my parents, they really never, I don't want to say they didn't really support me at home, but they didn't really support me at home. They didn't help me with my homework; they got my older brothers to do it. Part of it was the language barrier [her parents speak Chinese], so I guess they kind of took the role that the educator, that the teacher was the one who was really doing the educating [and] that they didn't really need to help. (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006)

When a discussion of the level of family's involvement at school became "a really heated debate" in one of her university classes, Ariel shared that "people have to take into consideration that everybody is different; everyone has different lifestyles and you can't just, you can't judge too quickly." Ariel admitted that even though she does not "want to be that kind of person," a conference with the parent of a pre-kindergartener during her first-semester internship revealed how she "can judge a person too quickly,"

> This is bad. I don't want to think that I'm a prejudiced person, but I guess I can judge a person too quickly. I don't want to be that kind of person. I know last semester one of our little girls – she was so smart. Her mom came in for a conference, and it was just how she was dressed and I guess I kind of judged her

> too quickly. And then listening to the conference between her and my [cooperating teacher]; I mean, this woman is amazing. She provides so much support at home and she has so much going on at home too and it's just, her home life and helping all of her kids. I've learned not to judge too quickly and I've learned that I have prejudices and stereotypes that I need to confront as well. (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006)

This experience led Ariel to continue to examine her beliefs and identify areas that she needed to confront in order to be a more effective teacher. Along with two members of her cohort, Ariel developed a "literature unit on celebrating differences and part of the focus of that is building a community of learners and friends and people who respect each other," a characteristic of the human relations approach of Sleeter and Grant's (1994) typology of approaches to multicultural education. While this unit was something she hoped to use at the beginning of the year in her future classroom, her self-reflection in her present field placement focused on other areas of teaching. She admitted that diversity "hasn't been one of [her] main focuses at all…As far as taking their culture into account, that hasn't really happened yet" (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006). Instead her self-reflection focused on the content of the lesson and whether her students thought the lesson "was too hard or too easy", whether she was "making enough accommodations for everybody," and whether the lesson was engaging and interesting for her students.

Although she was not focusing on diversity in her planning and instruction, Ariel said that "culture [was] a big thing for [her]. She continued,

> I really want to have a culturally responsive classroom. But I think, personally, I think more importantly it's just about getting to know your students. Part of that entails culture, but just overall what they're interested in, how they work, what type of learners they are, what they value, [and] what works for them." (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006)

When I asked Ariel to explain what having a culturally responsive classroom meant to her, she replied,

> I haven't really thought about this. Just, um, knowing your students, knowing they're different cultures, knowing how important their cultures are to them, because some students know more about their culture than other students. Um, I guess knowing their families as well…Having multicultural materials that students can use. Just building a community of respect and tolerance and understanding. Not tolerance – that sounds bad; acceptance where the students can learn from each other. (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006)

In his review of research on teachers' beliefs, Pajares (1992) pointed out that pre-service teachers' beliefs are "well established," and at the same time, "usually unarticulated and simplified" (p. 321). Although Ariel expressed her desire to have a culturally responsive classroom, she had previously not been asked to articulate what that meant to her and what that might look like in her classroom. Without articulating what a culturally responsive classroom means to her (and without applying these ideas to practice), Ariel had only an emerging understanding of this approach to multicultural education.

Like Ariel, Emma recalled a theme of "not [making] quick judgments" throughout her coursework at State University. Her consideration of the assumptions and judgments she was making centered on parents and families,

> It was pretty much *the* class on diversity [where we learned] we should try to learn about the backgrounds before you make assumptions or make judgments and say, "The parents aren't helping at home." You have to take into account what's going on that's making it hard to help – if it's neglect or if it's they're working this many jobs. And learning how the student's role varies at home. Like if they're supposed to be the caregiver to younger siblings at home if they are left with the responsibility with cooking and cleaning or stuff that I never had to do at that age. Just I think the main theme from my classes at [State University] was not to make quick judgments – learn as much as you can about the situation and try and work with it rather than giving up and not helping when it's pretty easy if you just took the time. (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007)

Once Emma began the PDS, she recognized the difficulty in setting aside her prior beliefs and being open-minded to consider the situations of others,

> I like to think of myself as open-minded, but it really was a test because there were situations where I would I say, "well tough." But you can't put that on the student, and I think that's what I learned the most. You can't – no matter what

> they're dealing with at home – you have to do the best you can with that. I mean, you can ask their parents to help, but you can't bring that grudge into it. You have to do what you can with the situation. I think that was hard to learn. It was hard to give up. It's a lot easier to say, "Well, they're not going to get that help. I guess their not going to get their spelling words; they're always going to get bad grades." So it took a lot to change that viewpoint to something more accommodating; something not what I have experienced, but you really have to try to put yourself in someone else's shoes, because it's unrealistic to think that everyone had the background I had or my best friend. (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007)

Emma recalled hearing teachers, though not her cooperating teacher, complain about the lack of parent involvement at the school. While her cooperating teacher acknowledged "not getting much parent support," Emma did not believe she was "negative about it." She continued,

> There was a lot of things she had to do on her own, but she never, she was never negative about it. It was just a different environment [than the school where she previously worked]. She was very matter-of-fact about it. (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007)

While she was not able to explain a particular situation that helped her "to change that viewpoint to something more accommodating," Emma offered the following explanation of how it had influenced her practice during her internship and apprentice teaching semesters,

> I think I'm quicker to try and figure out new ways to teach some things or different ways of practicing material at school instead of taking it home. I definitely think about it, and before I don't think I would have considered it. It would have been one of those tough toenails types of things. (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007)

Students who Emma provided additional accommodations for at school were students learning English as a second language. This was something she observed her cooperating teachers do as well. Emma thought it was "interesting to see someone acquire English as a language. I know trying to learn Spanish in middle school and high school, it was just extremely difficult and you lose it so quickly". This included activities

that focused on vocabulary development using pictures that "went along with the vocabulary cards" and "a lot of modeling as far as writing goes." Emma found it "a big struggle" to think of "simpler vocabulary that [the student] probably already had and building on that" (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007).

Other than using the message of "not [making] quick judgments" to provide accommodations for students instead of assuming "they're not going to get that help" and that they will "always get bad grades," Emma was unable to provide additional examples of how confronting her tendency to make judgments had been translated into her teaching. To explain this, Emma offered the following,

> I feel like when we talked about it [teaching in diverse classrooms] most was before the PDS when there wasn't as much to apply it to. And now it would probably be more relevant, if it were in the PDS, because I know it's been consistently easier taking these classes to have a student that you are thinking of that you can pull examples from and kind of use. And say, "Well, I have this student. She does this and this. She's good at this, this, and this. She struggles with…I need to find a way to help her." But as far in the recent PDS classes there hasn't been much on teaching in a diverse classroom. (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007)

In this quote by Emma, she suggested the need to connect theory to practice. As an inexperienced teacher, however, she found it difficult to consider how what she was learning about teaching in a diverse classroom to her practice, since these discussions took place prior to her admission to the PDS and when her only classroom experiences were ones where she was the student.

The participants who described experiences that prompted them to confront prejudices had previous cross-cultural experiences. Some of the participants lived in racially diverse neighborhoods although they felt "the middle class kind of tied everyone together" (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007); other participants had diversity within their families (Emma was the daughter of a Jewish father and a Christian mother). However, conversations about difference with their families and friends were limited.

Ariel said that diversity "wasn't talked about at all at home" (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006) or with friends. She also questioned whether or not her parents were colorblind. Emma recalled that her parents were "really open with religion," but "not really money-wise or race" (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007). As the two examples illustrated above suggested, the prejudices the participants were confronting were connected to socio-economic status, particularly students from a working or lower socio-economic status. Throughout interview data, participants conveyed the idea that though they have "seen it [poverty]" in their field placements, they "have not talked about it" (Sarah, interview, December 5, 2006) in their university courses.

Observing Teachers

By the time pre-service teachers enter their teacher education programs, they have spent over 13,000 hours observing teachers (Britzman, 1991), which Lortie (1975) called the apprenticeship of observation. While these observations are powerful in shaping pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching (e.g., Anderson, 2001; Borko & Punam, 1996; Calderhead, 1996; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Hollingsworth, 1989; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Richardson, 1996, 2003), pre-service and in-service teachers credit their field placements, particularly their student teaching experience and their relationship with cooperating teachers, as influencing their beliefs and practice (Su, 1992). Early field experiences, the semesters prior to student teaching, often involve more direct observations of the cooperating teacher than opportunities for the pre-service teacher to engage in teaching lessons. Beliefs that are the result of a direct observation are related to "the 'I saw it with my own eyes' phenomenon…and connected to one's sense of self" (Pajares, 1992, p. 318). By seeing it with their own eyes, pre-service teachers are able to see what works, and what does not work.

Based on her university coursework, Brenna expressed a desire "to be more aware" of cultures. While she did not think she "was never disrespectful of cultures," she realized that she "just wasn't as informed" as she needed to be to communicate effectively with her students. Without educating herself about cultures other than her own, Brenna questioned, "How can we really communicate with our students if they don't understand us and we don't understand them?" (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006). Once Brenna began the PDS, she was able to see that what she was learning in her courses at State University was "not just something we talk about,"

> I guess for me to see all the things that we've heard about and talked about and discussed, I've been able to see it all in action. This really does happen. It's not just something we talk about. It's not just something that happens in a certain city. It happens everywhere. I'm seeing it…and I'm learning a lot, that's for sure. (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006).

Conversations about teaching in a diverse classroom were regular exchanges between Brenna and her cooperating teacher. During one of my final observations (April 26, 2007), Brenna's cooperating teacher also talked to me about her teaching and ways she could be more culturally relevant/responsive to her students (Gay, 2000, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995). The focus of the cooperating teachers' conversations with Brenna included the importance of involving families in the classroom through in- and out-of-class projects and connecting the students' home and school experiences. Brenna's observations of her cooperating teacher and the relationships she had built with the families of her students has prompted Brenna to want to focus on this during her first year of teaching (Brenna, interview, May 17, 2007).

In addition to the experience of observing a teacher Brenna described as "awesome," Brenna also benefited from the amount of responsibility she was given by her cooperating teacher during the apprentice teaching semester. This included treatment as "another teacher in the classroom rather than as a student teacher" (Brenna, interview,

May 17, 2007). Brenna felt her cooperating teacher was flexible and gave her opportunities to plan original lessons rather than rely solely on lesson plans and ideas given to her or based on district curriculum materials. While Brenna cited observed practices of her cooperating teacher that "worked" (Zanting et al., 2003) as being influential in her teaching, she also was given the opportunity to "test" these practices throughout the semester and see "the role that these [practices had] in [her] actions as [the teacher]" (Richardson, 1996, p. 113). Guskey (1986) suggested that changes in beliefs follow changes in behavior; rather than changes in beliefs preceding changes in behavior. In the case of Brenna, she adopted practices that "worked" (Zanting et al., 2003) based on what she had observed "with [her] own eyes" (Pajares, 1992, p. 318), rather than first understanding the cognitions and the decision-making that served as the basis for what she was observing. However, Brenna's focus on what "worked" rather than the beliefs that were guiding her cooperating teacher's decisions and practice resulted in beliefs that were not consistent, particularly when discussing the families of her students. I will discuss this further in the following theme, Shifting and Unstable Beliefs.

For other participants, observations of their cooperating teacher provided them with models they wanted to make sure they avoided in their own classrooms. Pam said that "the most powerful thing" she experienced was her cooperating teacher's treatment of a student during her internship in a kindergarten classroom,

> There was this one kid in my kindergarten class and the teacher had very low expectations for him. She always told me that he was mentally retarded. She didn't really expect much from him. But one day when she was outside doing testing for the TPRI [Texas Primary Reading Inventory] and he did this graph all by himself. That just showed me that if you have low expectations like that, then the kid is going to perform that way. So, maintaining high expectations for all your kids, that's how it should be. No matter how you think. No matter what a test says about their IQ score or anything. They can do it; they're smart. So I think that was the most powerful thing that I've seen throughout this entire PDS. (Pam, interview, February 13, 2007)

In addition to having low expectations, Pam believed the classroom was "a negative environment to be in anyway no matter which student you were." For example, Pam explained that her cooperating teacher "had negative opinions about people of other cultures [that she openly shared with Pam]." Pam recalled, "It was very uncomfortable going in there" (Pam, interview, February 13, 2007). Though this experience happened a year before our interview, it continued to have an impact on Pam during her apprentice teaching in a pre-kindergarten classroom. Based on the sense of community established in one of her university courses, Pam wanted to establish a similar community in her future classes,

> I took a class last semester, and we had this introduction and it created this community of learners…It was a project about us and it just created this community of learners that you don't see in other classes. I would certainly take an idea like that and implement it in my classroom. For example, maybe the first two weeks, we can just talk about ourselves, where we come from, how we learn, what is important to us – things like that…It's so much more different than going into a class for the first time and just looking because you don't know who your peers are…So, just establishing that and having them learn about each other initially would probably create this kind of community where the kids can learn from each other and bring in their own experiences and enhance their knowledge. (Pam, interview, February 13, 2007)

In addition to learning from each other, Pam hoped this community would create an environment counter to the negative environment of the kindergarten classroom in which Pam completed an internship. In terms of Nespor's (1987) framework of characteristics of beliefs, Pam's belief that it is important to have a positive classroom community where children can learn from each other and bring their experiences into the classroom because of the negative classroom environment she experienced was an example of alternativity. According to this characteristic of beliefs, teachers base decisions for their classroom that are counter to negative experiences they had in classrooms in the past. In addition, the classroom community Pam observed in her university course "worked" (Zanting et al.,

2003), and therefore, prompting Pam to want to apply this practice to her future classrooms.

Other than Pam's belief in the importance of community, Pam expressed a strong interest in having a constructivist classroom, where "kids learn more from play or from interacting with other peers rather than the teacher sitting up there and explaining, 'Ok, this is how you do the problem. Or this is how you solve this situation'" (Pam, interview, February 13, 2007). At the time of our initial interview, Pam had not assumed many subject areas, so her opportunities to plan lessons that aligned with her belief about how students learn were limited. She responded to my additional questions toward the end of the apprentice teaching semester, where she expressed her disappointment in how the semester had progressed with respect to planning more child-centered and constructivist lessons, "No, unfortunately I was not able to teach many constructivist lessons because my CT wanted me to teach in a more directive manner. She teaches like this" (Pam, electronic response, April 19, 2007). As a result, Pam was unable to test her beliefs in the classroom. Therefore, she ended her apprentice teaching unaware of the impact these beliefs will have in the classroom based on direct experience.

There were very few similarities found within the backgrounds of Brenna, Pam, and other participants who described the time spent observing their cooperating teachers as influential in reshaping their beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. Some of participants had experienced being "the only colored person in the room" (Pam, interview, February 13, 2007); others recalled conversations about difference among family members and friends; and still others remembered an absence of conversations about difference. This sub-theme demonstrated the power of the cooperating teacher in influencing pre-service teachers' beliefs and practice. For Brenna, this was a positive experience. Her cooperating teacher provided a model of practice,

particularly her classroom community that sought to include parents and families, that was aligned with what Brenna recalled from her coursework at State University. Although Pam cited an experience that made her feel uncomfortable, it was equally as powerful. By observing a practice and a classroom environment that did not work, Pam was challenged to provide an environment counter to what she (and her students) experienced (Nepsor, 1987). Considering the level of influence the cooperating teacher has on pre-service teachers and their practice (Su, 1992), it was likely Pam's prior experiences and predisposition toward affirming diversity were a factor in her decision to use this observation of a teacher as an example of what not to do in the classroom. For pre-service teachers with limited cross-cultural experiences, this experience could have reinforced negative attitudes and beliefs about students from backgrounds different than their own.

Refining Beliefs

Other participants felt they entered State University and the PDS with beliefs already aligned with approaches to multicultural education. They believed their coursework served to refine these beliefs rather than challenge them. Instead of providing an interruption of beliefs, Brittany believed her coursework gave her tools she could use "to find out about their [her students'] backgrounds" but that it did not "challenge [her] beliefs or anything" (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006). These tools included having multicultural materials and books in her classroom library, labeling items in the classroom in more than one language, and giving her students disposable cameras to take pictures of their families and the things that are important to them outside of their lives at school (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006). None of these tools challenged her thinking or required a lot of work on her part as the teacher. They were all tools that could be added to the existing curriculum without challenging its structure (Banks, 2004).

She believed that her "philosophies and beliefs are from what [she] experienced as a student" (Brittany, electronic response, April 7, 2007). When asked to describe what she considered as she plan for instruction in the diverse early childhood classrooms in which she was placed, Brittany explained,

> I'm really interested in my students as people, so their culture, obviously, is a big part of that. I like being able to talk about it…Each culture is different and so they have different things they can contribute to each lesson…I like having discussions and learning about different cultures, obviously, because I'm a minority. (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006)

During subsequent interviews, Brittany shared that she believed several of her students had been "whitewashed" (Brittany, interview, April 5, 2007). Many individuals "are forced to reject parts of their ethnic cultures in order to experience success" (Banks, 1994, p. 47), which researchers refer to as assimilation. In our initial interview, Brittany credited her experiences as "an ESL student" for wanting to become a teacher, so she could help "children to feel valued and important" (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006). In later interviews, she expressed her desire to be "normal." While many view assimilation "as a weapon of dominant groups designed to destroy the cultures of ethnic minorities and to make their members personally ineffective and politically powerless" (p. 127), Brittany saw assimilation as a positive and desired outcome. She did not believe being Americanized was "a bad thing," for she, too, had been Americanized or "whitewashed,"

> I don't think it's a bad thing…I'm pretty whitewashed. I don't really, I don't eat Vietnamese food. I talk to my mom in English; she talks to me in Vietnamese. But I'm pretty much, you know, I feel like I was raised as an American…My mom and dad aren't whitewashed, but I think since I go to school in America, I feel like I'm very Americanized now, and that's what I mean by whitewashed. (Brittany, interview, April 5, 2007)

When talking about her students who were members of an ethnic minority, she believed assimilation did "not [mean they] were losing their culture, but it means you become

more Americanized" (Brittany, interview, April 5, 2007). She felt they could have both, though she felt that the process of losing her Vietnamese culture was "a battle her parents lost" (Brittany, interview, May 9, 2007) because of her desire to be "normal."

In my final interview with Brittany, she shared that upon further reflection she did not feel any of the lessons I had observed during the semester would be considered an example of multicultural education in practice and that to be a culturally relevant or responsive teacher is "easier said than done" (Brittany, interview, May 9, 2007). Although she assured me "that culture was important to [her]," she continued to struggle with wanting to more closely identify with her Vietnamese ethnicity and her desire to be "normal" or Americanized. As a result of this struggle, Brittany expressed beliefs about culture that appeared contradictory, which I have detailed further in the final theme of this chapter, Shifting and Unstable Beliefs.

During Kaci's elementary and junior high school years, she remembered there was "a lot of just one culture." However, diversity was not ignored at home, "Well, we did not see a lot of diversity growing up when going to elementary school, but we talked about it, why it is important to be accepting of everyone and just being open minded." Once Kaci started high school, she attended school and had classes with students from "lots of different cultures,"

> We had two magnet schools on our campus….It was one school with an international school, so there were a lot of exchange students coming in. Lots of different cultures. Then, we had an art school on campus, so definitely just lots of different cultures working together. It was very cool. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

Kaci credited this cross-cultural experience and her family upbringing for her beliefs and interest in teaching in a diverse early childhood classroom. However, she felt her beliefs "were all kind of scattered and out there before" and her coursework and field placements

at State University helped her "put them together [to define] who [she] was as a teacher. She explained,

> I wouldn't say that it's [coursework and field placement] challenged my beliefs, but it's made me kind of refine them and really think about them as a whole vision. Because I think they were all kind of scattered and out there before and they were all things that I believed, but I had never put them together and defined who I was as a teacher. Now that I'm becoming more of a professional and getting ready to interview I really do have to say, "This is who I am as a teacher. These are the things that I believe. This is what I want to do with my class." So I think it really made me bring it together in a way and start applying it, so now that I'm in the classroom and I have set these beliefs [and I am] really applying them and seeing how they work so I can refine my vision as well. I think it's made me more organized in making me really practice the things that I preach, so there was a lot of theory in there that I had to try out before I really wanted to put it in my vision. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

Part of Kaci's classroom vision was a commitment to helping her students not fear individuals who were different from themselves,

> I want to be a model for my students by creating an open dialogue and accepting the beliefs of others, even if they conflict with my own. We may have differences, but it is important to work together because more can be achieved when we share ideas. Diversity is only feared when it is based on ignorance or stereotypes, so the sooner students learn about other cultures and traditions, the more accepting they will be. (Kaci, electronic response, February 1, 2007)

In Kaci's field placements, she felt fortunate to be able to test her beliefs. Her cooperating teacher during her second-semester field placement supported Kaci's interest in connecting home and school so that "what [she's] teaching can go home with [her students]" (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006). This was something Kaci saw on the first day of school,

> The first day of school they brought in a bag and it had just different things that were important to them. So we sat in a big circle and we all shared things that we valued – so photographs and mementos from vacations – and so that was a great way from the beginning just to learn about who they were and the things that they value. Some students talked about their culture or religious beliefs and right away my teacher made it known that we could all talk about these topics and be receptive to new ideas. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

During the semester "these topics" were limited to religious holidays and languages other than English, as described by many other participants in the study. This included having students talk "about why they were going to be gone and what they were going to do" with their families on religious holidays and asking students how to say phrases in different languages as a way to help children to "be proud of who they are" (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006). However, Kaci realized "it would be a horrible disservice to my students to present only the stereotypes about a culture because that could potentially cause more harm than good" (Kaci, electronic response, February 1, 2007). She recognized the challenge wanting to help her students "learn about cultures even if they aren't represented in the classroom because they're represented in the world" without "present[ing] it in a stereotypical way or in a way that would offend anyone from that culture" (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006).

Kaci, Brittany, and the other participants who described their university coursework and field placements as refining their prior beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms had previous cross-cultural experiences upon which these beliefs were based. While they believed they were fortunate to be placed in classrooms with cooperating teachers who held similar beliefs, they did not indicate that they had been challenged to think beyond the beliefs they held upon entering the teacher education program. Kaci provided the following explanation about the complexity of learning to teach in a diverse classroom,

> Diversity is such a broad topic that it is easy to get lost in the subcomponents. Our nation is becoming more and more diverse, so, as teachers, we need to be prepared to teach a variety of learners. Our PDS has touched upon so many aspects of diversity that it has become overwhelming. It makes your head spin to think about the hundreds of possibilities to consider for any one lesson or student. So we compensate by picking the topics that are most important to us (our unique areas of expertise) because we have to start somewhere. As we become more proficient in the classroom and master certain elements of diversity, then our

> mind is free to take on other challenges. (Kaci, electronic response, February 1, 2007)

As Brittany explained, they were given "tools" that allowed them to put their beliefs into practice. However, other beliefs that were counter the goals of multicultural education were left unchallenged and remained intact.

Summary

In this theme, I have described the experiences that provided an interruption to the participants' prior beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. While these experiences were varied and influenced the participants in different ways, there was a connection between the nature of the experience and the participants' previous cross-cultural experiences. Students for whom these experiences were isolated and not supported in additional coursework or in their field placements often did not experience changes to their espoused practices. When these experiences were supported through additional coursework and in their field placements, the participants continued to reflect on the experience and continued to reintegrate these altered beliefs into emerging practices aligned with approaches to multicultural education. However, because of the complexity of learning to teach, the participants continued to express beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms that were unstable.

THEME FOUR: SHIFTING AND UNSTABLE BELIEFS

> Because personal meanings are contingent upon context and upon the perspectives of others, they are always shifting. Consequently the meanings one makes from practice are in a state of continual and contradictory reinterpretation as other contexts and other voices are taken into account or are ignored.
>
> Britzman, 1991, p. 15

For many of the participants in this study, the interruption of beliefs resulted in an espoused reshaping of their beliefs and practice in diverse early childhood classrooms.

However, many of these pre-service teachers simultaneously retained prior deficit beliefs that resulted in beliefs that were shifting and unstable. Pajares (1992) stated pre-service teachers have beliefs about teaching that, though well established, are "usually unarticulated and simplified" (p. 321). As pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to articulate their beliefs, they are also faced with "the realization of the overwhelming complexity of the teacher's work and the myriad ways this complexity is masked and misunderstood" (Britzman, 1991, p. 4). Therefore, the process of learning to teach includes beliefs and practices that " are always shifting…and in a state of continual and contradictory reinterpretation" as pre-service teachers consider "other voices" or ignore them (p. 15). Included in this theme were the following sub-themes: valuing/devaluing languages, affirming/ignoring difference, moving beyond/focusing on holidays, and partnering with/blaming families.

Valuing/Devaluing Languages

According to Ovando (2003), "[t]he debate about the schooling of language-minority students has to do essentially with the kind of citizens we want and need in our society" (p. 280). The debate is whether schools should "affirm cultural and linguistic pluralism through an additive process" or assimilate "language minorities into mainstream U.S. society by subtracting their ancestral cultures and languages" (pp. 280-281). Although research has indicated "English-language learners who develop a strong sociocultural, linguistic, and cognitive base in their primary language tend to transfer those attitudes and skills to the other language and culture," (p. 280), this has been widely ignored in practice in schools across the United States, where politics and policies are in support of an English Only movement. Ariel echoed this practice,

> A lot of people are worried about the bilingual programs in general, in Texas and in the U.S. I know California and I think two or three other states have the English immersion [model], where they don't even provide bilingual support, I think, not

> after a…certain grade level or year or something like that. And just America being, having so many immigrants and having so many cultures, how are we going to support our children if we just expect them to know English when they come and they don't? (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006)

Kaci also recognized "that first language is something to value and something the student needs to be more proficient in if they're going to learn a second language well" (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006). Only one of the participants, Brooke, described observing this belief in practice,

> My teacher made sure to ask, "Is he still speaking his native language? We don't want him to lose that." So we had a discussion about that, and how it's important for the kids to, you know, it helps the kids if they are learning their native language and English at the same time. It's going to be a lot better for them in the end and hopefully help them keep both of the languages. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Although students with "limited English proficiency may seem to be making rapid progress in the acquisition of English, having a command of social language does not necessarily equip that student for the more cognitively demanding tasks of the curriculum" (Ovando, 2003, p. 271). The participants in this study did not observe in classrooms where this understanding of the acquisition of a second language was modeled. While several of the participants had spent at least one semester of the three-semester PDS in an ESL classroom, most recounted activities designed to help students learn English as quickly as possible; others explained the cooperating teachers did "not much that [they] could think of" (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006) to help support students still acquiring English. For other participants, language was included in their classrooms only in additive ways (Banks, 2004). In addition to the examples provided in the theme Marginalizing Multicultural Education, the participants described asking students to "say little phrases" in the language spoken at home. One participant who described using this practice was Brittany. She explained,

> I remember this semester [second-semester] when my cooperating teacher told me that we had a Korean child and he didn't speak any English. So I got on the phone that morning and tried to find out how to say hello so I could greet his parents. We kind of messed up, but it was okay. I'm still trying to learn a little bit more Korean…Not to teach a lesson in Korean, but just to say hello and I've been teaching the other kids to say hello to him. The kids are showing a lot of interest, and randomly they'll be like, "How do you say candy in Korean?" or "How do you say this in Korean?" So after I taught them how to say hello, now they're on their own trying to ask him how to say different things in Korean. (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006)

Brittany's description of how Korean was used in the classroom was characteristic of the additive approach to multicultural education (Banks, 2004), where cultural practices are added to the curriculum without altering its structure. When asked to explain the basis for her beliefs about teaching in a diverse classroom, Brittany frequently referred to "[her] personal experience and what [she] went through as an ESL student" (Brittany, electronic response, April 7, 2007). Personal experiences are a common source of teachers' beliefs that Nespor (1987) referred to as the episodic structure of beliefs. Since she "didn't really value being different" as she was growing up, she emphasized wanting her students to know their culture and language were valued in her classroom,

> I think it is really important because as I was growing up I didn't really value being different, because I wanted to be like everybody else.…I want children to feel valued and important and being different *is* important. I mean it's okay. So just helping children and their culture feel valued in the classroom….Just so they know their culture, their language is valued in my classroom. (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006)

As described in the previous theme, Providing an Interruption of Beliefs, Brittany admittedly struggled between her Vietnamese ethnicity and her wanting to be "normal" and her subsequent "whitewashing." While Brittany wanted her students to know "their culture, their language" was valued in her classroom, she provided other descriptions of practice that indicated otherwise. In a second interview with Brittany, her description of an origami lesson revealed how she valued English over other languages. In this lesson,

the parents of a student from Korea came to the class to teach the students origami. Although the student's mother, who did not speak English, was the one showing the students how to make origami figures, his father, who did speak English, was given the credit as being the instructor,

> We had his mom come in – his mom and dad – and she doesn't speak in English, so his dad was really the instructor, but she's the one who knows how to do it. And so she would model and he would give us the instructions in English. (Brittany, interview, April 5, 2007)

During my observations of Brittany, she never discouraged the use of languages other than English, nor did she encourage them. Even though Brittany expressed her belief in valuing language, there was not an instance where I was afforded the opportunity to observe this in her practice. Her descriptions of how language was valued in the classroom paralleled the descriptions highlighted in the theme of Marginalizing Multicultural Education – the use of "little phrases," saying the days of the week or months of the year, and singing songs in languages other than English. Although Brittany assured me culture and diversity were very important to her (Brittany, interview, May 9, 2007), there were no references to the students, their families, or their cultural backgrounds in the lessons I observed throughout the semester. In fact, the only connections to the students' prior knowledge or experiences I observed were to other classroom lessons. As a result, Brittany's espoused affirming stance toward diversity and difference was largely ignored in her practice.

Affirming/Ignoring Difference

The majority of the participants attended elementary, middle, and high schools where diversity was not present and/or not addressed in the curriculum other than the inclusion of holidays throughout the year. While enrolled at State University, the participants learned about the importance of seeing difference and creating a classroom

environment that was representative of not only the students in the classroom but also the larger community in which they lived. Once they began their field placements, the participants observed and taught alongside cooperating teachers who had their own practices with respect to multicultural education. As previously discussed, the cooperating teacher has a significant influence on their pre-service teachers' practices (Su, 1992). Britzman (1991) described the "lure of the traditional" (p. 219) that often results in pre-service teachers following and supporting the status quo for the purpose of compliance and consistency. However, some of the participants felt uncomfortable with their cooperating teachers' attention to diversity – the celebration of holidays. Their concerns were not based on their interest in moving beyond a "foods, fun, and festivals" approach to multicultural education (Ladson-Billings, 1994b, p. 23). Their concerns were rooted in their uncertainty if differences should be affirmed or ignored.

As previously discussed in the theme of Marginalizing Multicultural Education, the participants' definitions of multicultural education were limited to discussing holidays and languages other than English in the classroom. Although I never asked the participants about their attention or inattention to holidays in the classroom, the majority of the participants focused on this topic throughout the interview. For many of the participants, they alternated between exposing their students to different traditions and fearing that they may offend students or their families. During my interview with Olivia, she had the following things to say about addressing different holidays or celebrations with a diverse group of students,

> Some cultures or religions don't recognize the same things. And I think it could be really easy to offend some people especially if you are at a really diverse school. I think that is something that would influence your teaching and what you would choose not to expose them to. (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006)

A question of whether or not affirming differences in the classroom was offensive and potentially "embarrassing" for students was found in the interviews of other participants. Emma shared,

> I feel like it's probably hard to acknowledge everyone's background, because you do want to make everyone feel welcome, but you don't want to go so far to make someone embarrassed or call too much attention. I think it's finding that balance and showing students that you genuinely, you know, you're interested in what their life is like, what their family does. You know, just setting that up, making the kids become comfortable in that role. "My teacher respects me and so I can tell her about this stuff and she won't make me feel embarrassed." (Emma, February 27, 2007)

Emma recognized the importance of making her students feel welcome and showing genuine interest in their lives outside of school. However, she also questioned if students would feel comfortable "tell[ing] her about this stuff." Hailey expressed similar concerns when it came to addressing difference in the classroom. Her fear that "one kid [may] say something about another kid" was based on her previous cross-cultural experiences,

> In junior high and high school, I went to a small school, and you just had so many different cliques. Just the races, I mean, if they were black and you were white, then they were always talking smack to you and just, "Oh, you're doing that; you're getting your way; you're white." (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007)

The obvious racial tension at Hailey's junior high and high school carried over to her teaching and the fear that affirming difference could result in similar confrontations among her students,

> I mean, you're going to pay attention to it, but you're not going to, what's the word, it's just going to happen and it's just going to occur and you just hope that one kid is not going to say something about another kid and you're just going to have to deal with it as it comes. (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007)

As I asked the participants to continue explaining their beliefs and why they felt affirming differences could be "offensive" or "embarrassing," the instability of their beliefs became apparent. For example, I asked Olivia to explain why she would choose not to expose students to things with which they were unfamiliar. She responded,

> I don't necessarily think it is better to have no exposure than something that might be offensive. I think when I choose to present a custom or tradition I need to be prepared in case some of the parents or students are offended. (Olivia, electronic response, December 6, 2006)

As my interview with Hailey continued, I asked her to expand on the notion that by affirming difference she was setting up environment where students might start "talking smack" about each other. Hailey responded by recognizing that when it came to acknowledging the diversity in her classroom, "I probably should do more than I do." She continued by talking about her university coursework and that she did not "remember anything from those classes" that discussed diversity. Later she added, "That's horrible, though, to say that, because they're such important classes" (Hailey, interview, February 16, 2007).

Throughout my interview with Olivia, she appeared to still be determining whether or not "present[ing] customs or traditions" could potentially be offensive. For Olivia, this depended on how the customs or traditions were presented,

> I think it is important to address them [holidays], but (pause) in a tactful way. I don't think it is appropriate to ignore Christmas. I don't think it is appropriate to ignore the different holidays just because not everybody celebrates them, because then in trying not to offend some people you offend other people by not addressing things. Um, so I think there is an appropriate way to talk about things. (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006)

When I asked Olivia to explain "the appropriate way," her response was further evidence of the instability of her beliefs and the influence of my prompting,

> Um, just I think you need to know the make-up of your classroom so that you can, if some people celebrate different holidays or don't celebrate holidays you can talk about that…You need to expose them to lots of different things, and do it in an appropriate way. Don't push your beliefs; just kind of talk about things. (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006)

Although Olivia recognized there would be an appropriate way and an inappropriate way to address culture, holidays, or other differences in the classroom, she was not clear as to what that appropriate way might be.

As the data in this sub-theme illustrated, the participants continued to focus on holidays when describing how they would affirm (or ignore) difference in their classrooms. The instability of their responses appeared to be a result of my questioning. This supports Pajares' (1992) assertion that pre-service teachers' beliefs are unarticulated and simplified and therefore subject to change. In the following sub-theme, I discuss data that indicates some of the participants were aware of the need to move beyond holidays when discussing difference. However, the participants felt their teaching was limited by the lack of other practices observed during their experiences as a student, an intern, and an apprentice teacher.

Moving Beyond/Focusing On Holidays

In their review of approaches to multicultural education used in early childhood classrooms, Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2000) found that most early childhood educators used an add-on approach to multicultural education. In this approach, also known as the tourist approach, teachers focus on cultural celebrations, dances, food, and traditional clothing during certain parts of the year – usually in association with a holiday, such as Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo, Hanukkah, or Black History Month. Ladson-Billings (1994b) cautioned against "superficial celebrations of heroes and holidays," since it "trivializes multicultural education and conveys the idea that diversity issues come into play" (p. 23) when celebrating such holidays.

As explored earlier in this chapter (See Marginalizing Multicultural Education), the celebration of holidays was a common practice among the participants in this study and was reinforced by their cooperating teachers. Kaci described how holidays were

addressed through everyday talk in the first grade classroom in which she completed her second-semester internship,

> Well, even just in talking to the kids we would talk about their holidays. So I knew one of the students was going to celebrate Eid and so I was asking her to talk about it and some of the students around us didn't know what that was and so I said, "Can you tell them what Eid is? They're curious; they want to know." And other holidays that are celebrated like Yom Kippur and other things that come up that maybe other students didn't know about. I don't know. It was really just an open dialogue where they could talk about it. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

During my interview with Brooke, she also emphasized the holidays that were addressed in the kindergarten classroom in which she completed apprentice teaching. Since it was a recent event in her classroom, her focus was on Chinese New Year,

> We celebrated the Chinese New Year and we have several students from India and so we are going to do something with that and it is a lot of fun and the children are so interested in learning about all the different things. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Brooke recognized that in her own schooling experiences "that's really as far as [they] got." However, she believed called that different holidays in the classroom "the easiest thing to do,"

> A lot of times the easiest thing to do is just the different holidays, but I think it's challenging to not just do that, because it seems like an easy way to introduce it. And…it's great now, but I remember in my school that's really as far as we got. That's really all we did up through high school. And I think right now that's fine to be just talking about the holidays because it's exciting to them and they have things they want to share. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

Aware that students (and adults) who identify as White do not always describe themselves in terms of their race or believe they have a culture (McIntyre, 1997, 2002; Tatum, 1992, 1997) Kaci's second-semester cooperating teacher had her first grade students complete the following activity around Thanksgiving with the intention of showing the students "they all have traditions and they all have a culture and that it's valued,"

> Something really cool my [cooperating teacher] did was for Thanksgiving they all got this booklet and it's about traditions, and so it didn't have to have a religious association, but they said, "This is a tradition that my family has." So it could be cooking a Thanksgiving dinner or going to dinner on someone's birthday. So it didn't have to, it could be totally secular. And talking about how the tradition started and why it's important to their family and so that helped them to see that they all have traditions and they all have a culture and that it's valued. So I thought that was a really neat way for them to all talk about who they are and what's important to them. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

Kaci recognized her limited knowledge of cultures outside of her own and the "horrible disservice" of presenting only "stereotypes" to her students,

> Sometimes it is difficult for me to talk about different cultures in my classroom because I am not an expert in most religions or cultural practices. I think it would be a horrible disservice to my students to present only the stereotypes about a culture because that could potentially cause more harm than good…I should do research and talk to peers of that race or ethnicity so I can talk to my students about diversity in a knowledgeable manner. I think parents can be extremely helpful in this area because they have native clothing, might speak the culture's language, and can prepare traditional food or teach a traditional dance. (Kaci, electronic response, February 1, 2007)

As demonstrated through this quote, Kaci calls presenting only the stereotypes of a culture a "horrible disservice," suggesting that she is aware of the need to move beyond the images usually discussed in school. However, she continues by saying that a way that she could "talk to [her] students about diversity in a knowledgeable manner" is to have parents present the clothing, language, food, and dance of the culture – components of culture critiqued by researchers advocating for a more integrated and transformative approach to multicultural education (e.g., Banks, 1993, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994a; Gay, 2000, 2002; Sleeter & Grant, 1994). Brooke also recognized the need to move beyond a focus on holidays. I asked her, "What might that look like?" She responded,

> I really haven't seen any others, so I guess it's hard for me. I guess that's where I need help. I realize this is not my area of expertise at all, because I didn't have that and I didn't grow up learning much about other cultures. That's where we need skills and things and past the basic, I mean, I'm with little kids now, but past

> that I wouldn't know what to bring up with older kids. (Brooke, interview, February 26, 2007)

These pre-service teachers were aware of the need to move beyond "superficial celebrations of heroes and holidays" (Ladson-Billings, 1994b, p. 23), but were unsure of what this might include because it was not something they had observed in classrooms as a student or as an apprentice teacher. For Brooke, she felt the focus on holidays was appropriate in her kindergarten classroom, "because it's exciting to them [her students] and they have things they want to share." Even with older students, who Brooke thought a move beyond holidays was more appropriate and necessary, she was unclear of what that would include. Kaci suggested one way to ensure accurate portrayals of culture was to involve parents and families. Her desire to include parents in her classroom leads to the final sub-theme providing evidence of the instability of the participants' beliefs.

Partnering With/Blaming Families

McWilliam et al. (1997) described four different philosophies regarding parents typically found in early education and child care programs: families as victims, families as a necessary evil, families as consumers, and families as partners. In the families as victims philosophy, families are viewed "as victims, ignorance, and circumstance" and are "blamed for rearing their children badly and neglecting them" (p. 67). The goal of this philosophy is to save children through education. The goal of the families as a necessary evil philosophy is to educate the child and "maximizing the child's learning potential" (p. 69). Families are viewed as "evening caretakers" and are not seen as contributing to the curriculum or school except to observe the progress of their child. In the families as consumers model, families are viewed as "buyers or recipients of a service" (p. 70). Parents' opinions are considered, but only as a way to further the business and to attract new parents, or consumers, to the business. The goal of the families as partners

philosophy "is to raise the child as the parents would" (p. 72). Families and teachers contribute equally to decision-making, with the teachers seen as experts on teaching and parents seen as experts on the development of their child (p. 72). In *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), the goal is for teachers to establish reciprocal relationships with families. This is most similar to the families as partners philosophy. Families and teachers should have mutual respect for each other and work together "toward achievement of shared goals," (p. 22). In addition, communication decision-making, and assessments and planning should include both the teachers and the parents.

Although within the field of early childhood education there is an emphasis on building strong partnerships with parents and families, little attention is placed on building and maintaining these relationships in teacher education programs (Broussard, 2000; de Acosta, 1996; Morris & Taylor, 1998). The participants in this study described the emphasis placed on partnering with parents and involving them in the classroom. However, they thought their courses lacked attention to how to build and maintain this partnership or involvement. Therefore, their understanding of parent relationships and descriptions of how they would work with parents were vague. For example,

> I'm kind of nervous about dealing with parents, but what I've learned in the cohort is that, you know, parents are there to help you. You can't control what happens at home, so always make sure that you keep them involved and keep them in your room…and have an open-door policy. That is going to be really important to me, because I don't want a parent to ever feel that they aren't welcome in the classroom. (Amanda, December 6, 2006)

Here Amanda revealed her understanding that "parents are there to help you" and her interest in ensuring the parents felt "welcome in the classroom." At the same time, she claimed, "You can't control what happens at home," suggesting she believed parents have parenting practices that need changing. She continued that perhaps if children are

acting out, “It’s not necessarily because of something I’m doing. It might be because the parents aren’t putting them to bed on time.”

For other pre-service teachers, like Brenna, the majority of what they learned about partnering with parents came from conversations with cooperating teachers during their field placements. As previously discussed in her beliefs about classroom community (see Focusing on Developmentally Appropriate Practice) and observations of her cooperating teacher (see Providing an Interruption of Beliefs), Brenna believed that one of her cooperating teacher’s strengths was her commitment to helping parents and families “feel very welcome in her classroom and feel like they can play a part” in their child’s education. Her cooperating teacher emphasized this commitment from the beginning of the school year,

> From the first time we met them at Meet the Teacher, she’s like, “My door is always open.” Her big this is, “You are your child’s first and foremost teacher. I’m here to learn from you so together we can help your child succeed.” She really makes them feel that they know more about their child than she does and I think they appreciate that. She’s very open and she’s very non-judgmental. I think they feel very welcome in her classroom and feel like they can play a part. (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006)

While Brenna reported “nothing but positive interactions with the parents I’ve met” (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006), she also criticized parents for not supporting their children at home on things such as homework. For example, Brenna shared that one of her students is the only child in a household of 11 adults. She claimed, “He has all of these adults around him, yet there is no one at home to help him with his homework. It’s unfortunate that there is no one around that can support him.” In both of these examples, Amanda and Brenna expressed beliefs that could be described as being aligned both with the families as victims and the families as partners philosophies (McWilliam et al., 1997).

As in the sub-theme of affirming/ignoring difference, there were participants whose beliefs about parents changed based on my prompting them to further explain their

beliefs. Olivia believed that there should "be a collaborative effort between the school, the teacher, the student, and the family" and emphasized that "the parent and the student and the teacher [should work] together toward the same thing for the [child]." This belief aligns with an approach that values the partnership between home and school the contributions of families to the decisions made concerning their children. Later in the interview, Olivia expressed more of a "families as victims" belief when she questioned whether or not her students were loved at home,

> Every child wants to feel like they're loved and they won't always get it at home so you need to, I think you need to make every child's experience the best you can no matter where you're teaching. We just, at every school no matter the income there's going to be problems. (Olivia, interview, November 17, 2006)

When I asked her to explain why she felt that way, Olivia's response revealed the instability of her beliefs. She then stressed that parents may not show "the love that WE would give to our children" suggesting a right way and a wrong way to express love,

> I think that all students will be loved at home. [Parents] love their children. I guess what I mean is that they might not get the love that WE would give to our children. Some parents might be working multiple jobs or have lots of children at home. Students may not be receiving love in a way that is visible, and I think it is important that every child feels loved when they come into the classroom. (Olivia, electronic response, December 6, 2006)

Even within this response, Olivia expressed beliefs that were contradictory to each other. As this sub-theme demonstrated, the instability of the participants' beliefs were evidenced by the way they described how they both valued parents and blamed them for things such as not supporting their children at home, putting their children to bed on time, or loving their children the way they believe parents should. McWilliam et al. (1997) and Bredekamp and Copple (1997) emphasized the importance of partnering with parents and including them in decisions connected to their child's education. The data presented in this theme suggests the complexity of pre-service teachers' beliefs and that these beliefs are continuing to develop during their teacher education program. The participants spoke

as though they had embraced a partnering with parents philosophy, but only as far as seeking parents help with homework and expecting parents to love their children and to care for their daily needs. The participants did not address what the parents provided for their children or what the parents could offer them as teachers; only what they recommended for parents.

Summary

Few in education would argue the complexity of learning to teach. The data presented in this theme highlights this complexity. Because of the strength of prior beliefs when learning to teach (e.g., Anderson, 2001; Borko & Putnam, 1996; Calderhead, 1996; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Raths, 2001; Trotman & Kerr, 2001), as pre-service teachers are presented with "other contexts and other voices" (Britzman, 1991, p. 15), their beliefs enter "a state of continual and contradictory reinterpretation" (p. 15). According to Pajares (1992), this is a result of well-established beliefs that are "unarticulated and simplified" (p. 321). As pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to articulate their beliefs, those beliefs are frequently unstable and are easily influenced by further reflections and explanations for the reasoning behind their beliefs.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have presented data and analysis that demonstrated how the participants in this study focused on developmentally appropriate practices and marginalized multicultural education when describing their beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. In addition, I have included accounts of the experiences the pre-service teachers attributed to having influenced and/or challenged

their beliefs. The final theme illustrated the complex nature of pre-service teachers' developing beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms.

Based on this interview data, a second phase of data collection focused on observations of three of the participants from the first phase of data collection. Through these observations, I was able to explore how the participants worked to meet the needs of diverse classrooms of students during their apprentice teaching semester. In addition, individual interviews with each of the participants provided additional insight into the reflective practices of these developing teachers. The data from the second phase of the study is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: In the Classrooms of Pre-service Teachers

> Learning to teach – like teaching itself – is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become.
>
> Britzman, 1991, p. 8

By observing in the classrooms of teachers, researchers are able to develop a more complete understanding of the research context (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Mertens, 1998). In addition, through observations researchers can learn

> …how the actions of research participants correspond to their words; see patterns of behavior; experience the unexpected, as well as the expected; and develop a quality of trust with your others that motivates them to tell you what otherwise they might not. (Glesne, 1999, p. 43)

From these observations, additional interview questions can be developed based on "known behavior, and their answers can therefore be better interpreted" (p. 43). As an observer, Glesne reminded us that the purpose of being in the research setting is not to preach or compete for status; the focus should remain on the research participant. Thus, I assumed such a stance during my classroom observations.

In the second phase of data collection, my interviews and observations focused on the participants from the first phase of data collection who reported placing attention on the diverse backgrounds of their students during planning and instruction and expressed an affirming stance toward diversity. The three participants who scheduled times with me to observe in their classrooms were completing their apprentice teaching in three different schools in the same school district, City Independent School District, and in three different grades. Brenna completed her apprentice teaching in a second grade classroom at Whitney Elementary School, a school serving a predominately low-income and Latino student population; Brittany completed her apprentice teaching in a first grade classroom

at Snyder Elementary School, a school serving a predominately middle- to high-income and White student population; and Kaci completed her apprentice teaching in a pre-kindergarten classroom at Cerda Elementary School, a school serving a predominately low-income and Latino student population. Nearly half of the student population at Cerda Elementary School was reported as having Limited English Proficiency (Texas Education Agency, n.d.).

As the quote by Britzman (1991) that introduced this chapter suggests, teaching is a process "of formation and transformation," reflecting on the decisions one is making in the classroom, and the teacher one is becoming (p. 8). The participants in the second phase of data collection previously had expressed a cultural sensitivity and awareness and an interest in becoming teachers responsive to the cultural diversity in their classrooms. However as Nieto (1999) reminds us, simply having cultural sensitivity and awareness does not mean these will automatically transfer to culturally relevant practices. Using qualitative data analysis outlined by Glesne (1999), Huberman and Miles (1984), and Miles and Huberman (1983), interviews and observations with the three participants' in the second phase of data collection resulted in the following themes: Adopting Pedagogical Approaches and Reflecting on Practice.

In the theme Adopting Pedagogical Approaches, I will describe the participants' practices during their apprentice teaching semester. As in the previous chapter, these practices focused primarily on developmentally appropriate practices. In addition, the observations yielded additional practices not previously discussed. In the theme Reflecting on Practice, I will detail the nature of the participants' reflective practice focusing on teaching in a diverse classroom.

BRENNA

From the first time I entered Brenna's second grade classroom at Whitney Elementary School, it was apparent that she and her cooperating teacher worked together as a team. On days when I would arrive early and before the class had returned from lunch or specials, Brenna and her cooperating teacher would be planning for an upcoming unit or sharing ideas about the following day's social studies lesson. Having completed her second-semester internship in the same classroom, it appeared the cooperating teacher, as well as the students, viewed Brenna as an integral part of the classroom community. Brenna confirmed this observation,

> [My cooperating teacher] always treated me like another teacher in the classroom rather than as a student teacher. I think that made a big difference in how the students treated me and how I approached each day. I was the teacher. If they were bored or not engaged, then something's wrong with my teaching. That's really how I feel…It's my job. The pressure. (Brenna, interview, May 17, 2007)

As a result, Brenna worked throughout the semester to ensure that her teaching was appropriate for her students.

Adopting Pedagogical Approaches

Based on the time I spent in Brenna's second grade placement classroom, I was able to observe both practices she had previously described in our interview in the first phase of data collection as well as practices she had not described. Two pedagogical approaches that were regularly observed in Brenna's practice were promoting peer collaboration and discussion and emphasizing education and learning.

Promoting Peer Collaboration and Discussion

Finding groups of students collaborating on various projects became an expected part of my observations in Brenna's classroom. As discussed in the previous chapter, Brenna emphasized the importance of providing students multiple opportunities to work

collaboratively during instruction. She believed through collaborative work students "can learn from each other…[and] can support each other" (Brenna, interview, December 9, 2006). This collaboration was also important to Brenna because it gave all of her students an opportunity to have their voices heard. She discussed her interest in promoting peer discussion following my first observation in her classroom, a read aloud that would be the basis for a Reader's Theater performance about the life of George Washington Carver,

> I want all of my students…to try their hardest and to know that their ideas are important. I want my students to *want* to contribute to the discussion. I want every, I want to hear something from each student at least once during a read aloud. I try to get them engaged and I try to get them to ask questions… It is really important to me that every student is with me and knows what they have to say is important. It's a challenge to try to get to every student engaged. It's my goal. (Brenna, interview, February 19, 2007)

Even during whole group instruction, Brenna ensured that her students had ample opportunities to talk to each other and not just through her. One strategy Brenna used frequently was where she would ask students to turn to a partner and share their ideas about a question before sharing their ideas in front of the whole class. In some lessons, it was a strategy of convenience when more students wanted to share than time allowed. In the following example, Brenna's decision to ask her second grade students to turn to a partner and share ideas was based on convenience,

> *After listening to Brenna read the Dr. Seuss story* The Foot Book*, the children are told they will be writing their own tales of where there feet have taken them. Brenna asks, "Would anyone like to share a place their feet have taken them?" Overwhelmed by the number of volunteers, she tells the students, "Turn to a partner. Share with your partner some of the places your feet have taken you. We will come back together to share your ideas in five minutes." (March 6, 2007)*

During other observations, the strategy was used as a way for students to review what had been learned in a previous lesson. The example that follows was taken from a science lesson in Brenna's class,

> *"Turn to a partner – when I say go – and tell them something you remember about apples or peanuts or both." Brenna begins a science lesson where students will be using a Venn diagram to compare apples and peanuts, two foods that have been discussed at length as part of a unit on plant life cycles, by having students share what they remember from previous lessons. "I want everyone to come up with at least one thing they can tell me," she reminds the students. After the conversations appear to be winding down, Brenna says, "Bring your attention to the front. Raise your hand and tell me one thing your partner shared with you about peanuts or apples." (February 28, 2007)*

Having all students contribute to the classroom learning community is supported in research by Gay (2000, 2002) and Ladson-Billings (1994a, 1995). While these researchers encourage the use of peer collaboration and discussion since it aligns with the interactional styles of many cultural groups, Brenna did not provide a similar basis for her decision to have her students work and discuss topics together. As found in the previous chapter, her decision was based on her belief about how students learn. In the following sub-theme, placing emphasis on education and learning also drove many of the decisions Brenna made in the classroom.

Emphasizing Education and Learning

One aspect of Brenna's practice that she had not discussed prior to my observations was her emphasis on education and learning. Starting with my first observation and continuing throughout the semester, Brenna and her students openly discussed the importance of learning and their potential for having "light bulb" moments. An example of such a discussion follows,

> *Letter-by-letter, Brenna read aloud to the students about the life and accomplishments of George Washington Carver – G for George; E for education; O for opportunity, and so on. Brenna shares, "He wanted to learn and learn; just like all of you." Several students join in the conversation by talking about the importance of education. Midway through "Washington," a student is impressed by all George Washington Carver achieved and exclaims that he must have had a big light bulb, bigger than all of the students. Brenna says, "I think you could have a big light bulb too. You guys want to learn so much." (February 19, 2007)*

Following my first observation, I asked Brenna to discuss the use of the term "light bulb," since it was apparent it was an expression familiar to all of the students,

> [My cooperating teacher] always says, "Oh, I can see your light bulb just went off." They have all these great ideas. They want to learn, and that is how we reference it. I wanted to point out that they could have a big light bulb, too. Trying to get them to focus and to get their ideas out is the challenge, not coming up with ideas. I think every student has something unique…to contribute, because they are all so smart. I always, they have such good ideas and think of things I had not considered before. What would I do without my students? (Brenna, interview, February 19, 2007)

An interest in education and learning was often overheard in conversations among small groups of students as well as between teacher and student,

> Since the beginning of the year, we have done a lot with biographies of influential Americans. The theme that ties them altogether is perseverance; they never gave up. The kids, they are really familiar with that word. They'll even say – this happened just last week – [a male student] was having a hard time getting this activity, but he kept on going. And the students all started saying, "He's using perseverance. He's not giving up." They know how to use it in context. (Brenna, interview, February 19, 2007)

By emphasizing the positive contributions each of her students adds to lessons, Brenna has noticed that more students are willing to share ideas and enjoy participating in class discussions,

> When they share ideas, I will say, "That was such a smart thing to say." They listen better and they want to offer another smart thing to say. So it's both. I want them to know that everything they contribute is smart and a great idea. And it helps them tune in better when they know they have something important to contribute. I don't want to leave any of them out. (Brenna, interview, February 19, 2007)

Although she wondered if it made her lessons run too long, my observations of Brenna's teaching confirmed that all of her students did engage in lessons by offering ideas, asking questions, and feeding off of each other's statements. She believed it was important for each student to feel as though she or he was an expert in an area that was meaningful to them. For one student in her class, who struggled in reading and was more hesitant to

participate in class discussions, Brenna developed an activity built around an area where this student was an expert – sports.

> The sports fact of the day was something I created for him. His father came to a conference and said, "I hate reading. My son's going to hate reading. That's just the way it is." I didn't want to accept that as the final answer. By the end of the year, I wanted him to be reading more *and* enjoying it. So I started talking to him about what he likes, and he is really into sports. So I pulled a bunch of sports books from the library…I asked him if he would be interested in taking on a responsibility for me and he said yes. I told him, "Three minutes before read aloud each day, I want you to share a sports fact of the day." I made him this page that said, "Read for 15 minutes from a book about sports. Find an interesting fact and write it on a note card and then share it." The kids love it, and it is really motivating him. The kids really look forward to it and it has encouraged him to read and participate in class more. (Brenna, interview, April 3, 2007)

The classroom environment was such that students were willing to take academic risks. Brenna's emphasis on education and learning is supported in research by Ladson-Billings (1995), who called "the trick of culturally relevant teaching" is encouraging all students to "choose academic excellence" (p. 160). By working with and learning from her cooperating teacher as they built a learning community in the classroom, these second graders had chosen academic excellence.

Reflecting on Practice

Brenna's awareness of the importance of responding to the diverse needs of her students began in a language acquisition course the semester before she entered the PDS,

> When I took language acquisition, there was a lot of discussion about diversity. It was pretty much, all of the discussions came back to diversity. Even in talking about things like environmental print. What sort of environmental print have students been exposed to? It was so enlightening to me. I have learned that culture is so much more than just the country you come from or what language you speak. We've had a lot of discussions about this and it's helped me understand that culture is what these students are used to in their everyday life. What they are familiar with is what their culture is. I think it is important to know about each of my students and help them know where they are coming from. I want each student to be proud of who they are and where they come from. (Brenna, interview, February 19, 2007)

Once she began her field placements, Brenna believed she had been given an "opportunity to actually understand it and to see a diverse group of students working and learning together" (Brenna, interview, February 19, 2007). She believed she also benefited from having a cooperating teacher who was responsive to the diversity of her students. These experiences helped Brenna continue to reflect on her practice and on how she could best meet the diverse needs of her students,

> We have so many different backgrounds in this classroom. And just starting from, like, where they live to who is present in their life and influencing them at home. Just *so* different, and it's amazing to me. And so, I'm learning so much with them, and I'm learning that their background is as much a part of them learning as anything. So it's important to understand their background and where they came from. (Brenna, interview, February 19, 2007)

The question that followed marked the first time Brenna struggled to provide a response. I asked her to describe how she is using what she has learned about her students' backgrounds in her planning and in making decisions about how she is going to teach. She laughed quietly and shared,

> That is a really good question. I think it's always something you try to incorporate. I'm trying to think of a good example for you. Sometimes the books they read, I try to find books they can relate to. I mean, certainly a lot of these students wouldn't relate to a book about [voice fades]. Yeah, I don't know. That's hard; that's good. You know what I mean? [sighs] (Brenna, interview, February 19, 2007)

The next two formal interviews with Brenna focused on this very question: How are you connecting your belief that it is important to understand the backgrounds of your students and where they come from to what you are planning for your students and how you are teaching them?

Our next interview began with Brenna wanting to clarify some statements she did not feel she had articulated clearly enough in the previous interview based on the interview transcript she had received. She shared,

> Our experiences are all so different and we all bring that knowledge with us into the classroom. We all have unique background and experience and prior knowledge, and I think that is one of *the* most important parts of teaching – allowing students to use, to tap into that, everyone of them, into their prior knowledge and to really try to help them make the connections using what they already know. The trick is to do that for every student. And when every student comes from a different background then it's tricky. I'm always trying to bring out their prior knowledge and encouraging them to use that to connect with what we're working on now. (Brenna, interview, April 3, 2007)

Brenna continued that in addition to more formal lessons,

> Any time the students and I are interacting I try to think about what they know. What are they really going to relate to? What will they connect with? I'll give you an example. We were reading from a book in [our basal reader]. They gave a target goal for the week, I think it was main idea, and it was a great book, but the book was so out there. I think it was about making an apple pie, but also about going to Italy, going to Sri Lanka, visiting these places and I knew that my kids would have no connection to Sri Lanka. And yeah, we could pull out a map and I could go, "Look, it is right here. In Sri Lanka, you get lots of wheat" or whatever it was. But it wouldn't be very meaningful at all. So instead we chose a different book, and now I don't' remember what it was. But it still, we could talk about the main idea, but they could really relate to it. So that is why it is important. You need to make sure you are exposing students to something they can relate to, because when they can connect to what you are talking about, that is when they are going to learn. (Brenna, interview, April 3, 2007)

In this example, the way Brenna connected what she knew about her students, their background, and their prior knowledge was through the selection of literature. Since the focus of the lesson was on main idea, she chose a book that would have a plot more familiar to her students than the basal-selected book, which focused on traveling to countries such as Italy and Sri Lanka – countries of which she knew her students had limited knowledge. The other examples Brenna provided also centered on the selection of literature.

In our final interview, which took place two weeks after the completion of the apprentice teaching semester, Brenna shared an important realization about her efforts to implement multicultural education in the classroom,

> You know, I teach these lessons and I sit back and think, "Wow, that was really good. I included so much that they could connect to and they learned so much." But through the process of having to talk about what I planned, what I did, and why I did it, I have realized that I am not always doing what I think I am doing. It is so much harder than I thought to really plan and do things in the classroom that connect to what *I* believe and that really respond to all the diversity in the classroom. It is hard. (Brenna, interview, May 17, 2007)

When I asked Brenna to share an example of a lesson that she felt was her best example of multicultural education in practice she replied, "I guess I don't think any of them were." She continued by discussing the importance of engaging in a reflective dialogue to her emerging practice,

> It's too bad you won't be here next year. It would be really good if during my first year we could continue to talk. It has been so helpful to talk about what I am doing in the classroom and why. I need that, especially next year when I'm on my own. (Brenna, interview, May 17, 2007)

Although the interview concluded with Brenna feeling somewhat disappointed that she had not accomplished all she had wanted to with respect to connecting her beliefs about teaching in a diverse classroom to her practice, she was also hopeful that with continued reflection and support she would be able to create a classroom environment and to enact a practice that was relevant to and meaningful for all of her students.

BRITTANY

The oldest daughter of immigrant Vietnamese parents, Brittany made the decision to become a teacher based largely on her experiences as an ESL student growing up in a large city in southeastern Texas. As discussed in the previous chapter, Brittany believed it is important for all of her students to feel valued in her classroom, including their culture and language. This was something she did not experience in school where diversity was not discussed except for special occasions when a student of a racial minority background was the star of the week and shared family traditions or for holidays. However, Brittany recognized the inclusion of other cultures was superficial,

> It seemed like it was a lot more superficial, like the stereotypes. On Chinese New Year, I was able, I was *allowed* to bring in the red envelopes sometimes. Talking about it? No, we never talked about it [diversity] that I remember. (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006)

As a result, it was important to Brittany to consider her students' cultural backgrounds as part of her planning in her first grade apprentice teaching classroom at Snyder Elementary School, a predominately White school serving a middle- to upper-class student population. Brittany explained,

> When I plan for instruction, I consider a couple of things: 1) Will every child understand what I am teaching? Being Vietnamese, my parents did not have much experience with African Americans and slaves. Hence, my only exposure to it was in school. I am sure it is difficult when you do not have support at home to help you build on this knowledge; 2) If they might have a hard time understanding something, how can I help them? I try to build vocabulary through talk and pictures, even repeating it helps; and 3) Can any students bring in a different perspective because of their culture? (Brittany, electronic response, April 7, 2007)

Through my observations of Brittany, I was able to gain insight into how this planning was implemented in her practice.

Adopting Pedagogical Approaches

Based on the time I spent in Brittany's first grade placement classroom, I was able to observe both practices she had previously described in our interview in the first phase of data collection as well as practices she had not described. Two pedagogical approaches that were regularly observed in Brittany's practice were promoting peer collaboration and discussion and modifying instruction.

Promoting Peer Collaboration and Discussion

Whether a lesson in mathematics, writing, reading, science, social studies, or calendar, the first grade students in Brittany's classroom had opportunities to work with their peers. One strategy that Brittany frequently used was similar to the peer discussion strategy used by Brenna described above. Brittany felt an advantage of this strategy was

"that everyone gets a chance to at least share their opinions or thoughts or answers" with another member of the classroom community (Brittany, interview, December 6, 2006).

As found during my observations of Brenna, this strategy was used in a variety of ways in Brittany's classroom. One way I observed this strategy being used was as an introduction to a new unit, allowing students to share their prior knowledge or understanding of a particular concept. The following observation of a science lesson on life cycles observed in Brittany's classroom provided such an example,

> *After students are settled on the carpet, Brittany says, "When I say 'eagles soar,' I want you to turn to a partner and discuss what you know about life cycles. Eagles soar." Soon the classroom is full of children's voices eager to share their knowledge of life cycles. Once the conversations start to quiet down, Brittany asks, "What is a life cycle?" As students share, Brittany continues to prompt the children with questions such as "Who would like to add to that?" and "Would you like to help him out?" Although Brittany is determining who shares and when, the conversation takes place among the students, who willingly share what they know about life cycles. (March 21, 2007)*

During other observations, the strategy was used as a way for students to review what had been learned in a previous lesson. Brittany used this strategy as a way for students to review what they have learned about the life cycle of a plant.

> *"What have we learned is needed for a plant to grow? On the signal 'eagles soar,' turn to your partner and discuss what we need when we plant a seed. Talk about what we have learned seeds need to grow. Eagles soar." The first graders quickly find a partner and begin to share what they remember about what a seed needs to grow into a plant. "Eagles land," Brittany says after a couple of minutes of sharing. The first graders finish their conversations and turn their attention to the front, with hands raised, ready to share what they have discussed with their partner. (April 2, 2007)*

As Brittany suggested when describing the benefits of this peer discussion strategy, these vignettes provide examples of how all students were given the opportunity to share their knowledge with another member of the classroom community. As previously discussed, the importance of having all students make contributions to the learning of the community and the alignment of peer collaboration and discussion with the interactional

styles of many cultural groups has been emphasized in the work of Gay (2000, 2002) and Ladson-Billings (1994a, 1995). However, Brittany talked about peer collaboration and discussion, as well as providing her students with active learning experiences and hands-on activities, as though it was how children learned based on her experiences and preferences as learners (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992).

Modifying Instruction

After spending the fall semester as an intern teacher in the same first grade classroom she was completing apprentice teaching, Brittany was well aware of the varying strengths and needs of her students. Once her apprentice teaching semester began, Brittany knew she would need to spend time during planning to determine how she could modify instruction to meet the needs of all of her students. Her attention to modifying instruction was apparent in each of the lesson plans she submitted to me. For example, Brittany described visuals and detailed questions of higher level thinking in her lesson plan for a calendar activity (February 21, 2007), provided a variety of manipulatives and other resources for a mathematics lesson (February 27, 2007), and allowed students to work in pairs and created a word bank to assist students during a science lesson on the life cycle of frogs (March 21, 2007).

As she assumed more responsibility for planning and instruction, Brittany realized that these general modifications were not enough. She began to plan more specific modifications for specific students. While many of her students enjoyed writing and excelled in that area, two of her students found writing a struggle, particularly when copying words from the board or a pocket chart. Since writing was a large component of word studies in her classroom, Brittany knew she needed to modify the task so that these students would be learning the same material, participating in the same lesson, but

engaging with the task in a way that was more appropriate for their learning needs. During word study, students review a set of 5 word wall words as well as an additional set of words that have a similar pattern.

> *As Brittany and a student pass out white boards and dry erase markers with a built-in eraser, students write and erase familiar words. The word wall words of the week are reviewed on note cards and then placed in a pocket chart so students can refer to them during the activity. Before the lesson begins, Brittany gives two students a set of word cards. As sentences based on classroom events are read aloud, the students listen for the blank in the sentence, refer to the pocket chart, and search for the missing word. The two students for whom Brittany had created the modification were able to keep up with their peers by referring to their personal set of word cards an completed the activity successfully. (March 9, 2007)*

While these modifications were created with certain students in mind, Brittany made them available to all students who felt the modifications would be helpful in completing assignments.

In addition to these pre-planned modifications, other modifications were made in-the-moment when Brittany found that lessons were too challenging or not challenging enough for her students. One example of a lesson that Brittany discovered was too challenging for her students was a mathematics lesson on fact families. During her mathematics block, Brittany set up multiple centers that students would complete in small groups over two days. On this particular day, students worked collaboratively on games focused on number operations, while Brittany worked with a small group on fact families. After the first small group struggled to make the flip book and generate their own fact families, Brittany quickly regrouped and assembled a pre-made fact book for the next small group to come to her center,

> *"I have to tell y'all a secret. Lean in close. The flipbook was a little bit harder to make than I thought it would be." Brittany uses a white board to review fact families with students. "Let's use the numbers 1, 4, and 5. Who can give a sentence to go in this fact family?" After a student shares a number sentence, Brittany says, "Let's check. Is that right?" Brittany passes out a preassembled*

flipbook and models how it should be used. After giving students an opportunity to use this flipbook, she asks, "This flipbook - is it kind of hard or kind of easy?" (February 27, 2007)

Each of these modifications enabled Brittany's students to experience success. The modifications, both pre-planned and in-the-moment, became a regular part of Brittany's instruction. Their regularity and the way in which the modifications were introduced by Brittany meant that students did not hesitate to seek out assistance from peers, Brittany, the cooperating teacher, and the resources and modifications Brittany had developed.

Reflecting on Practice

As we began the second interview, Brittany shared that the moments of silence in the previous interview made her uncomfortable. When she was considering how to articulate a response, the fact that the tape recorder was recording this silence was unnerving for her. She asked if during the interview, if there were moments of silence, if she could reach over and press stop so she could take the time she needed to reflect without recording. I agreed. The questions that prompted Brittany to stop the tape focused on two topics: the relationship between her beliefs and practice and the assimilation or "whitewashing" of her students.

As found in the previous section on Brenna, Brittany struggled to provide examples of how her beliefs about teaching in a diverse classroom were evidenced in her teaching. Since Brittany's personal experiences as a Vietnamese-American and an ESL student were the basis for her interest in becoming a teacher, I wanted to understand more about how this experience impacted the decisions she made in the classroom. As discussed in the previous chapter, Brittany continued to struggle between identifying with her cultural background and her desire to be "normal." She believed the same was true of her students who were of a racial minority. Below are portions from this interview

transcript to highlight the questions that prompted Brittany to pause, press "stop," reflect, and consider how to articulate a response,

> HB There are 9 children in your classroom who are of an ethnic minority, but you said he [a student who recently moved with his family from Korea] was really the only one, because the others – how did you put it?
>
> B They were whitewashed (laughing). (tape stopped) A lot of our students are half-Caucasian and half-minority, but that means that they've pretty much, um, adjusted into American society, customs, and way of life. I don't think it's a bad thing. For example, I'm pretty whitewashed; I don't really, I don't eat Vietnamese food. I talk to my mom in English; she talks to me in Vietnamese. But I'm pretty much, you know, I feel like I was raised as an American….My mom and dad aren't whitewashed. But I think since I go to school in America, my friends are all something-American. I feel like I'm very Americanized now, and that's what I mean by whitewashed…
>
> [interview continues]
>
> HB You said that you've noticed that with your students?
>
> B Most and even him. I think they are trying to keep their culture, but also they want to be "normal." So I remember I told you, or maybe I didn't tell you, but at the beginning of the year the language barrier was hard on both the school and the family, so we suggested that they go to another school in [the district] where they do have Korean instruction, but they said no that they would rather stay at [Snyder] and stay with it and stick it out and they wanted to try it. And so, not they are losing their culture, but it means you become more Americanized…
>
> [interview continues]
>
> HB Why do you think that happens?
>
> B Because it's the norm. I go to school and we all speak English. I go to school and we don't eat dumplings everyday, so things like that…
>
> [interview continues]
>
> HB Tell me more about your lessons and the connections you see between your beliefs and your teaching. How your lessons are an example of what you believe about teaching in a diverse classroom.
>
> B Well, I don't think our classroom is *that* diverse.

HB So if students have been Americanized, what do you think that means about their ethnic backgrounds?

B (tape stopped) I don't know. I always consider whether or not vocabulary or words, like I said earlier, are in *their* vocabulary words. Like, in Vietnamese there are a lot of words in English that you can't translate to Vietnamese or the other way around. Um, I don't know. That's a trick question.

HB About how you see your beliefs in your teaching?

B Yeah.

HB Why do you think that's a trick question?

B Because I can't think of any examples. (tape stopped) I guess it is so natural, I don't even think about it.

While Brittany raises some interesting concerns, she does not question them. She has accepted them as fact. Although she referenced these experiences as why she wanted to become a teacher, her comments suggest she is unsure how to translate her experiences into action and to move away from "the lure of the traditional" (Britzman, 1991, p. 209). Additionally, Brittany shared that she does not necessarily think about how her beliefs are evidenced in her teaching. Zeichner (2005) asserted that reflection aided "the development of the novice teacher's ability to exercise his or her judgment about when to use particular practices and how to adapt them to the specific circumstances in which they are teaching" (p. 118). This was something that had been missing from Brittany's practice. She had not engaged in "the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the consequences to which it leads" (Zeichner and Liston, 1987, p. 24).

In our final interview, Brittany continued to struggle to articulate her beliefs and practices in a diverse classroom setting. When asked what she had learned about teaching in a diverse classroom through the process of the interviews and reflecting on her practice, Brittany said,

> "It is easier said than done. One reason I wanted to be a teacher is that there aren't many Vietnamese teachers out there and I wanted to help with that connection between home and school. But it's harder than that….I promise it is important to me (laughing). (Brittany, interview, May 9, 2007)

Here Brittany realized that it would take more than just wanting to help students connect their home and school lives and an awareness of the importance of affirming diversity. She realized it would take reflection, practice, and support to help transfer her beliefs to her practice.

KACI

Standing tall above her pre-kindergarten students, Kaci spends a lot of time leaning over or shifting to her knees so that she can talk eye-to-eye with her students. Her quiet voice rarely changes tone or pitch as she talks with her students about sharing what they learned during centers, helping to solve disputes, or searching for lice. In fact, the only fluctuation in Kaci's voice comes while she reads stories aloud to her class. The care in her voice supports what Kaci had previously discussed about being a caring teacher,

> I definitely see myself as a caring teacher…I think the caring aspect is just knowing the way I was raised and the kinds of teachers that I had really facilitated that growth within me. So when they cared about me as a whole person, I learned so much more that way…They really did think of me as a whole person and not just as a student and, you know, forgetting about me at the end of the day. Um, so I think that's where a lot of that comes from. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

In addition to being a caring teacher, Kaci expressed an interest in being a culturally relevant teacher long before this study began. Based on my affiliation with the cohort in which Kaci was a member, I had had previous opportunities to talk with her. When introducing herself at the first meeting of one of her PDS courses, Kaci shared her interest in learning more about teaching in diverse classrooms. Now nearing the completion of her three-semester PDS, I was able to observe how these beliefs were evidenced in her practice.

Adopting Pedagogical Approaches

Based on the time I spent in Kaci's pre-kindergarten placement classroom, I was able to observe both practices she had previously described in our interview in the first phase of data collection as well as practices she had not described. Two pedagogical approaches that were regularly observed in Kaci's practice were engaging students and building independence.

Engaging Students

As discussed in the previous chapter, many of the participants viewed believed that students learned through actively participating in a lesson, rather than listen passively to the teacher. Kaci believed that her young students benefited from social interactions. This was important to Kaci since she wanted her students to know that they can learn from their peers as well as the teacher,

> [Students] need to have a lot of social interaction, especially since I work with kids who are a lot younger. I think the social interactions help them learn and realize that they do have other people that they can learn from besides the teacher… Playing around with different ideas and making mistakes is really important, so they see what works and what doesn't and why it works or why it doesn't work. (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006)

Kaci shared that a challenge in her classroom was developing lessons that enabled all children to participate. Her pre-kindergarten classroom was located in a double-sided portable. In the other half of the portable was an early childhood classroom for students with special needs. The teachers in these classrooms worked together closely, with students moving back and forth between the classrooms for various activities. When Kaci planned and taught lessons, all of these children were included. Therefore, there was a wide range of physical, emotional, and academic abilities in her students,

> [For] my pre-k students…, I had to take a multitude of mental, emotional, and physical capabilities into consideration when planning lessons. Some students spoke very little (either because of special education or being ESL) and

> sometimes they did not understand what I communicated. I had to ensure that each and every lesson could be adapted to meet ESL students, physically handicapped students, students with emotional difficulties, and students with developmental delays. The continuum from low to high ability was much greater in this classroom that any other I had ever seen, and I had to ensure that no student was left out of a lesson. It was a challenge that I relished. (Kaci, electronic response, July 2, 2007)

One way Kaci frequently helped to engage all of her pre-kindergarten students in the learning process was through the use of questioning,

> *During a read aloud of The Very Hungry Caterpillar, a student asks, "What happened to the caterpillar?" Kaci responds, "Who can remind us what we observed with the caterpillars in our class?" The pre-kindergarten students describe the process of the caterpillars forming a chrysalis and that they are waiting for them to turn into butterflies. Kaci asks, "Have your classmates helped answer your question?" As the lesson continues, Kaci continues to engage her students through her questioning, "What's going to happen to that little egg do you think? Yes, it's going to hatch. And what do you think will come out of that egg? What do caterpillars do? What will he do after this? That is right; he will build a house. This 'house' is a cocoon or a chrysalis. Can you say chrysalis? So he is going to build himself a little house called a chrysalis for two weeks. When he is in the chrysalis, he is going to change. What will he become?" (April 2, 2007)*

In this lesson, Kaci engaged the students in a discussion by "ask[ing] questions…, [making] comments and suggestions that stimulate children's thinking and extend their learning" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 19), which aligned with her espoused beliefs about the role of the teacher in the classroom.

Another strategy Kaci used to engage all students in her lessons was through music. As mentioned above, some of her students spoke very little. However, observations revealed that all of her students enjoyed listening to the music and moving side-to-side or moving their arms or legs to the rhythm. In response to the final interview, Kaci shared that she wish she would have used music even more,

> Looking back, I really wish that I had done more during music to make it more responsive to the needs of students in the classroom. I should have incorporated more songs from various countries, provided more pictorial cues for ESL

> speakers, and done more to include the wheelchair-bound student in my class who was nonverbal. It is also unfair to assume that students are familiar with nursery rhymes and popular songs (I'm a Little Teapot, Mary Had a Little Lamb), so I will do more in the future to teach these songs as opposed to just singing them. Since the semester ended, I have been collecting books and CDs of nursery rhymes and songs from various countries. I also think that this is a good time of day for parents to volunteer. If they have a song from their culture that they would like to teach the class, I would be extremely open to having them come in to share it. (Kaci, electronic response, July 2, 2007)

Although some may consider the singing of songs from various countries another example of "foods, fun, and festivals" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 23), Kaci's response indicates an awareness of the presence of mainstream nursery rhymes and songs in her teaching and a desire to include more than the songs popular in mainstream America.

Building Independence

Throughout the apprentice teaching semester, Kaci encouraged her pre-kindergarten students to work independently. Recognizing that some of the students had not developed as advanced fine motor skills, several accommodations are made during a lesson where students are asked to cut out zoo animals and glue them in the correct habitat. These accommodations helped students complete the assignment independently,

> *"Are you ready to cut out your animals?" Seeing that the student was unsure how to manipulate the scissors, Kaci models how to use the scissors. "Open. Close. Open. Close. There you go. You did it. You cut out an elephant! Now cut out this bear." Other students join in by chanting, "Open. Close. Open. Close," as they cut out the various zoo animals. One of the students begins to have trouble with scissors that "keep sticking." Kaci finds a pair of spring-loaded scissors that are easier for young children to grasp. Students question what these scissors are for. "It helps him cut better. It is easier to control." Noticing the student is unsure of where to cut, Kaci traces the box with a red marker. "You can cut on these lines." (April 24, 2007)*

Instead of completing the cutting for the two students, Kaci modified the task and enabled the students to finish the cutting successfully and independently. Once students had completed cutting out the zoo animals, they needed to glue the animals in the

appropriate habitat. As students move to this part of the activity, two students began to argue over one of the bottles of glue.

> *"Did he have it first or did he take it from you? What can you tell him? Do you need me to help solve it or can you solve the problem on your own?" Kaci shifts her attention to the other students in the small group. After a couple of minutes have passed, she returns to the students who wanted the same bottle of glue. "Did you solve your problem?" (April 24, 2007)*

In this example, Kaci gave her students prompts to "help [them] solve their own problems" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 19), which allowed the two students to find a solution on their own rather than depending on a teacher to intervene and come up with a solution on their behalf. These two pedagogical approaches, engaging students and building independence, were two of several approaches that Kaci used that were evidence of her thoughtful consideration of the diverse needs in her classroom.

Reflecting on Practice

Through our interviews, I was given insight into decisions guiding Kaci's practice that were not evident in my observations. Like Brenna, Kaci spent a lot of time thinking about the selection of literature,

> I also like to incorporate culturally appropriate books during read-aloud and silent reading time. Reading books with Latino or African protagonists shows all students that there is not just one type of "hero," especially when most of my students are fans of superheroes that are predominately white males (Spiderman, Batman, Superman, etc). I also included both male and female protagonists into read alouds. Teaching this way has become a part of everyday life in my classroom, not something I do only once or twice a year. (Kaci, electronic response, July 2, 2007)

This response indicates Kaci's awareness that multicultural education is not something that should be added to the existing curriculum, but should become the daily curriculum (Banks, 2004). The responsibility of being a teacher was something that Kaci did not take for granted,

> Being a teacher involves so much mental preparation in addition to the physical prep[aration] of setting up a classroom and buying supplies. I am a teacher, so I think about ways to improve my curriculum all the time, even when I am not working with a classroom. [Some pre-service teachers] may put off thinking about these big ideas because they don't feel like they are in a place to make these decisions. As a result, those individuals are not constantly thinking about and revising their philosophies and thoughts on multicultural education/culturally relevant teaching which means they may not be as active in including diversity in their planning. (Kaci, electronic response, July 2, 2007)

By participating in ongoing reflections of her practice, Kaci recognized the importance of "the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the consequences to which it leads" (Zeichner and Liston, 1987, p. 24). She credited our interviews and reflections on raising her awareness of her role as the teacher,

> I feel so fortunate to have been a part of this study…, because it has made me so much more aware about my role as a teacher and the actions I take in the classroom. The classroom environment can be made or broken based on my actions and curriculum, so I have become more thoughtful of how I meet the needs of my students, and I think I also have done more to assess my own work in the classroom…I have been asking more reflective questions of my students, such as "Did you like that lesson? Why are why not?" and "Did that make sense to you?" and "What else would you like to learn about?"…This helps me to be a more responsive teacher. (Kaci, electronic response, July 2, 2007)

CONCLUSION

Conducting ongoing observations and interviews with these participants provided me with insight into the classrooms of pre-service teachers as they continued the process of becoming a classroom teacher committed to bridging their students' home and school lives and to embracing a practice aligned with various approaches to multicultural education. While each of the practices highlighted in the theme Adopting Pedagogical Approaches were observed in all three classrooms, I chose to describe in detail only two approaches that were implemented with the greatest regularity for each participant. As found in the first phase of data collection, the participants' focus remained on

developmentally appropriate practices. However, the design of the second phase of data collection allowed me to explore the decisions and the beliefs underlying these practices. Although the participants' affirming beliefs toward diversity were not always reflected in their practice, the fact that their students were working collaboratively in positive learning communities and experiencing success should not be overlooked. Through the theme Reflecting on Practice, I explored how the participants were thinking about diversity and reflecting on the decisions that impacted their practice. As the data indicated, the participants often struggled as they considered the relationship between their beliefs and their practices. By engaging in ongoing reflective dialogue, the participants examined aspects of teaching they had not always considered on their own.

But what does an understanding of pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms and the experiences that influenced and/or challenged these beliefs offer teacher educators? In the final chapter of my dissertation, I seek to provide the answer to this question as well as answers to the original research questions that guided my study: What are pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms? and What experiences do pre-service teachers attribute to having influenced and/or challenged their espoused beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms?

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

> It is essential that student teachers come to conceive of multicultural education as an integral and embedded part of teaching and schools; every decision, action, assignment, organizational structure, and communicative act works either toward or against the goals of multicultural education.
>
> Grant & Zozakiewicz, 1995, p. 272

Teacher educators and multicultural education researchers continue to examine how teacher education programs can better prepare pre-service teachers to become teachers for all children (Grant & Agosto, 2006) and how they can help pre-service teachers view "multicultural education as an integral and embedded part of teaching and schools" (Grant & Zozakiewicz, 1995, p. 272). The data in the previous chapter provided evidence that the participants in this study continue to hold beliefs that result in actions that work "against the goals of multicultural education" (p. 272).

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms and the experiences they attributed to having influenced and/or challenged these beliefs. From my analysis of interview data from the first phase of data collection, the following themes emerged that described the pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms and the experiences that influenced and/or challenged these beliefs: Focusing on Developmentally Appropriate Practice; Marginalizing Multicultural Education; Providing an Interruption of Beliefs; and Shifting and Unstable Beliefs. In the first theme, Focusing on Developmentally Appropriate Practice, I explored the participants' focus on their beliefs about how students learn, the role of the teacher in students' learning, and the importance of building a classroom community when they were asked to describe their planning and instruction in diverse early childhood

classrooms. In the second theme, Marginalizing Multicultural Education, I described the ways in which the participants marginalized multicultural education by limiting what it included and by reserving it for particular subject areas, grade levels, and groups of children. In the third theme, Providing an Interruption of Beliefs, I presented the experiences, or "the clearest and most convincing contrary evidence" (Pajares, 1992, p. 317), that altered the participants' prior beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. In the final theme, Shifting and Unstable Beliefs, I examined the instability found in the participants' espoused beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms with regard to language, difference, families, and holidays.

From my analysis of interview, observation, and document data from the second phase of data collection, the following themes emerged that described the practices of three participants from the first phase of the study: Adopting Pedagogical Approaches and Reflecting on Practice. In the first theme, Adopting Pedagogical Approaches, I explored the participants' practices during their apprentice teaching semester, which focused primarily on developmentally appropriate practices. In the second theme, Reflecting on Practice, I detailed the nature of the participants' reflective practice focusing on teaching in a diverse classroom.

In this chapter, I seek to provide answers to the original research questions based on data analyzed into the themes presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5: What are pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms? and What experiences do pre-service teachers attribute to having influenced and/or challenged their espoused beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms? The data in this study point to the following: (1) the complex nature of beliefs about diversity; (2) the role of reflection; and (3) the construction of teacher education programs.

COMPLEX NATURE OF BELIEFS ABOUT DIVERSITY

There is little agreement across the literature and research available on pre-service teachers' beliefs. Although the research on the power of pre-service teachers' prior beliefs when learning to teach is extensive (e.g., Anderson, 2001; Borko & Putnam, 1996; Calderhead, 1996; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Raths, 2001; Trotman & Kerr, 2001), researchers have yet to develop a uniform or clear way to define "beliefs" (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Kagan, 1990; Pajares, 1992). Complicating this area of research are the multiple terms that are used interchangeably with beliefs. These terms include attitudes (Groulx, 2001); expectations (Weinstein, 1998); images (Calderhead & Robson, 1991); implicit theories (Schoonmaker & Ryan, 1996); knowledge (Alexander et al., 1991); personal history-based lay theories (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991); preconceptions (Weinstein, 1989); and teachers' cognition (Kagan, 1990). In addition, some researchers argue university coursework and field placements are ineffective in changing pre-service teachers' prior beliefs (e.g., Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Nettle, 1998; Tillema, 2000), while other researchers argue these prior beliefs can be altered (e.g., Gill et al., 2004; Groulx, 2001; Hollingsworth, 1989; Joram & Gabriele, 1998).

Even though there is not a consensus on what beliefs are, whether or not they can be changed, and what they should be called, the ample research in this area points to agreement in two areas: (1) beliefs exist, and (2) beliefs are cohesive and when expressed, represent a singular idea. The same is true in research on pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms. Research exploring pre-service teachers' beliefs with regard to diversity present data in categories suggesting the similarity in the beliefs expressed among participants and in the beliefs expressed by each participant within a given category of experience. For example, Burant and Kirby (2002) described

five categories of experience with respect to pre-service teachers' responses to an "educative practicum" in an urban school: deepening multicultural, eye-opening and transformational; masked multicultural; partially miseducative; and escaping (p. 565). When describing each category of experience, Burant and Kirby used language such as "their experiences," "all expressed a desire" (p. 567), "all of the participants," and "all preservice teachers" (p. 568), which suggested a uniformity of experiences and beliefs. Similarly, Gillette (1996) described participants as resisting, rethinking, or moving toward a culturally relevant teacher in response to a semester-long internship in an urban school. The characteristics of each of these categories were presented as though there was consistency across participants and within the beliefs and practices of each participant.

This study has demonstrated that pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms are more complex than previous research has suggested. First, the data suggested that pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms are continuing to develop during their teacher education programs. As White, middle class women, the majority of participants in this study had minimal cross-cultural experiences and limited opportunities to engage in conversations about their beliefs about diversity prior to their enrollment in State University. Consequently, the participants had developed pseudo-belief systems, about teaching in general and teaching diverse populations in particular, that were continuing to evolve during the teacher education program. As previous research has shown, the majority of communities across the United States continue to be racially and socially segregated (Tatum, 1997). Tatum asserted that as a consequence of this segregation, "most of the early information we receive about 'others' – people racially, religiously, or socioeconomically different from ourselves – does not come as the result of firsthand experience" (p. 4). Therefore, the information about "others" portrayed is often "distorted, shared by cultural stereotypes, and left

incomplete" (p. 4). These experiences – whether they are firsthand or secondhand experiences – have influenced pre-service teachers "ways of thinking about teaching learners who are diverse" (Milner & Smithy, 2003, p. 296). Over time these experiences have developed into belief systems that result in attitudes and beliefs that negatively impact the diverse students teachers teach (Horm, 2003; Sleeter, 2001; Townsend, 2002).

The research discussed in my review of literature is evidence of the efforts of teacher educators to challenge these beliefs. The mixed results of these efforts demonstrate that pre-service teachers are often resistant to conversations about diversity, inequity, and stereotypes (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Horm, 2003). As discussed in Chapter Four, the participants described experiences in both their university coursework and field placements that addressed diversity and stereotypes; conversations about inequities were less frequently reported. Britzman (1991) asserted that as other perspectives and "voices are taken into account or are ignored," meanings and beliefs enter "a state of continual and contradictory reinterpretation" (p. 15). The coursework and field placement experiences described by the participants served as the other perspectives and voices that challenged their prior beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. Based on research by Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991), Raths (2001), and Trotman and Kerr (2001), we know these other perspectives and voices were filtered through the participants' prior beliefs, but in this study, those beliefs were not monolithic or well-formed. As a result, the participants' espoused beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms remained in a state of reinterpretation as they described how they both valued and devalued language, affirmed and ignored difference, partnered with and blamed parents and families, and recognized the importance of moving beyond holidays, while continuing to focus on these celebrations in their practice.

In his review of research on teachers' beliefs, Pajares (1992) pointed out that pre-service teachers' beliefs are "well established," and at the same time, "usually unarticulated and simplified" (p. 321). As discussed on page 143, Ariel expressed her interest in having a culturally responsive classroom. When asked to explain what this meant to her, Ariel replied that she had not "really thought about this" (Ariel, interview, December 5, 2006). I argue that she had given the notion of a culturally responsive classroom some previous thought. What she had not been asked to do was articulate her beliefs or her understanding of a culturally responsive classroom to someone else. Thus, her beliefs were simplified, not based on meaningful practice, and provided additional evidence that pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms are continuing to develop during their teacher education programs.

Second, the participants lacked sufficient theoretical grounding to explain their beliefs about teaching and their teaching practices. As demonstrated through the data presented in Chapter Four, the participants did not reference any particular theory as the source of the decisions they made in the classroom. Only one participant, Pam, made such a reference when talking about her interest in implementing constructivist pedagogy in her future classrooms. As previously discussed, Pam was one of two participants who previously held a bachelor's degree and had returned to State University to pursue her teacher's certification. Perhaps the difference in her age and previous experiences helped to account for the fact that she grounded part of her beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms in a theoretical approach. The other participants referenced their personal preferences for learning or practices they had observed as a student or as an intern in their cooperating teachers' classrooms as the reasoning behind the beliefs they shared. This finding is particularly interesting when researchers have found that pre-service teachers often feel that the real learning in the process of becoming a teacher comes from their

field placements, and not the university classroom, since they believe they already know what they need to know about becoming a teacher. While I do believe many of the practices the participants described would benefit their students (i.e., promoting discussion and collaboration, considering students' interests in planning, building a classroom community, partnering with parents), without the ability to articulate their beliefs and practices in relationship to theory, the participants may find it challenging to defend their practices if questioned by administrators, colleagues, or parents in the future and may be overlooking opportunities to reflect on practice and "the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the consequences to which it leads" (Zeichne & Liston, 987, p. 24). More on the importance of reflection in the process of becoming a multicultural educator is discussed in the following section.

Third, this study challenges the notion that beliefs are monolithic. While the participants' espoused beliefs did not align entirely with the approaches to multicultural education discussed in the review of literature, there were areas where their beliefs overlapped with elements of these approaches. Therefore, some of the participants' espoused beliefs and actions worked toward the goals of multicultural education, while other espoused beliefs and actions worked against the goals of multicultural education. For example, the participants believed it was important for their students to participate in active learning experiences that included peer collaboration/discussion and were based on the students' interests. Similar findings were reported in the participants' beliefs about the role of the teacher. While their beliefs were aligned with elements of both developmentally appropriate practice and multicultural education (i.e., facilitating learning and promoting independence), the participants ignored other elements, such as empowering students to take action toward a more democratic society (Sleeter & Grant,

1994), helping students maintain their ethnic identity (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994a), and helping students understand how race has been constructed by and is a reflection of social, historical, and economic contexts (Banks, 1995). However, the bases for their decisions were not always authentic. Blizek (1999) asserted that "[c]aring is not just a matter of doing something, or acting in a particular way. It is also a matter of attitude" (p. 97) and motivation. He described "true caring" as being determined by whether we act in our best interest or the interest of others. I argue the same is true in other teacher-student interactions. As previously discussed, the participants often based their decisions to promote independence, for example, on their needs rather than on what they thought was best for their students.

This study has demonstrated that pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms are more complex than previous research has suggested. The pre-service teachers in this study both valued and devalued language, parents, and diversity, and expressed an interest in moving beyond a celebration of "foods, fun, and festivals" (Ladson-Billings, 1994b, p. 23), while continuing to focus on such celebrations in their practice. In addition, the complexity of the pre-service teachers' beliefs in this study reveals the difficulty in categorizing their beliefs and experiences into clearly defined categories as is often reported in research on beliefs in general and on beliefs about diversity more specifically.

THE ROLE OF REFLECTION

Similar to the lack of consensus within the research on teachers' beliefs, there is little agreement on how teacher educators can support pre-service teachers as they connect theory to practice. As discussed in the previous chapter, Brittany echoed a similar statement when she asserted that teaching in a diverse early childhood classroom was "easier said [belief] than done [practice]" (Brittany, interview, May 9, 2007). Pre-

service teachers enter teacher education programs with well-established beliefs and ways of thinking about teaching diverse learners (Milner & Smithey, 2003) that can be difficult for many pre-service teachers to abandon. Therefore, the approaches to multicultural education advocated by teacher educators often meets with resistance as pre-service teachers are asked to participate in conversations about diversity, inequity, and stereotypes (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Horm, 2003). For some pre-service teachers, these discussions present the first time they are asked to engage in such conversations.

Reflective teaching is a practice that has received much attention in teacher education research. Zeichner (2005), a leading researcher in the field of reflective teaching, asserted that the role of teacher educators includes more than just "passing along knowledge about good teaching practices." Teacher educators must also encourage "the development of the novice teacher's ability to exercise his or her judgment about when to use particular practices and how to adapt them to the specific circumstances in which they are teaching" (p. 118). One way that teacher educators can help pre-service teachers develop their understandings about multicultural education is through reflective teaching. By using the tenets of reflective teaching (Zeichner & Liston, 1996), pre-service teachers are given the space to discuss their lives and their understandings about the complex nature of the teaching profession and teaching in diverse classroom settings and they can examine their beliefs, which are often simplified (Pajares, 1992), and determine how they work "toward or against the goals of multicultural education" (Grant & Zozakiewicz, 1995, p. 272).

Zeichner and Liston (1987) argue that reflection should involve "the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the consequences to which it leads" (p. 24). While the participants in this study recalled significant opportunities to reflect during university

coursework and field placements, their reflections focused on the content of assigned readings, with limited attention to their beliefs or teaching in diverse classroom settings and the connection to their practice. In addition, the majority of these reflections were written and not verbal exchanges with others who may have challenged assumptions.

In the theme of Providing an Interruption of Beliefs, I presented data that illustrated the experiences the participants attributed to having influenced and/or challenged their beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. As discussed within this theme, these experiences were either supported with additional coursework at State University or in the participants' field placements or they were isolated. The impact of whether these experiences were embedded throughout the participants' PDS supported the argument against "stand-alone multicultural education courses" (Sleeter, 2001, p. 98). For the participants who reported isolated experiences, few opportunities for continued reflection surfaced. As a result, they were unable to provide examples of how this experience had influenced their teaching during internships and/or the apprentice teaching semester. Many of the participants continued to struggle with the same ideas in their practice. For example, Olivia was unsure whether or not addressing differences was appropriate after the isolated experience of reading *White Teacher* (Paley, 1979) and her subsequent realization of the problems of having a colorblind approach to diversity. Brooke, who also discussed the impact of *White Teacher* and conversations with classmates and her professor about this book, had additional experiences during her field placements that supported the importance of affirming diversity. As a result, she continued to reflect on this importance and continued to consider how to apply this awareness to her practice.

This study extends the current research by focusing on pre-service teachers' understandings of multicultural education in early childhood classrooms and connecting

this focus to research on reflective teaching. The importance of engaging in reflective practices was highlighted in the second phase of data collection. By engaging in ongoing reflections of their practice, the participants continued to develop an emerging understanding of multicultural education and an emerging awareness of their efforts to connect beliefs and theory to practice. For example, initial interviews revealed the participants focused on religious holidays and languages other than English in their definitions of culturally relevant teaching. As examples of culturally relevant teaching in their practice, the participants discussed celebrating Chinese New Year, Black History Month, and Yom Kippur, counting to 10 in languages other than English, and singing holiday songs in multiple languages. As interviews and reflections continued, the participants began to broaden their understanding of the term "culture" to include other factors such as race, gender, socio-economic status, and family structure. From this emerging understanding of culture, the participants began to reflect on additional ways to connect the home and school lives of their students through their teaching.

Reflective practice also assisted the participants as they examined the connections between their beliefs and the theories that guided their practices and the practices that were actually taking place in their classrooms. In the initial interviews, the three participants expressed their commitment to multicultural education. However, as described above, the participants' examples were limited to "celebratory moments with foods, fun, and festivals" (Ladson-Billings, 1994b, p. 23). Following observations, the participants' reflections aided them as they realized their interests in ensuring that their students learn academic skills in ways that are meaningful to them and in showing their students that who they are and where they come from are valued and recognized in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995) were not being actualized. As one participant explained, being a culturally relevant teacher was "easier said than done." This study

presented evidence that should encourage early childhood teacher educators to foster opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in self-reflection as they consider their beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms and how these beliefs work toward or against the goals of multicultural education. These opportunities should be integrated throughout teacher education courses, both prior to and during the semesters including field placements, so that students have ample support as they examine prior beliefs, critique these beliefs in light of "other contexts and other voices" (Britzman, 1991, p. 15), and reintegrate these beliefs into their developing practice.

Reflections about diversity, by itself, did not help pre-service teachers with their practice during field placements. According to the participants, they wanted more specific examples of how "to do" multicultural education. In their field placements, they needed more opportunities to observe models of culturally relevant/responsive teaching beyond the additive or contributions approaches (Banks, 2004) or the teaching the exceptional and culturally different approach (Sleeter & Grant, 1994) to multicultural education. The participants needed to reflect about diversity, their own practices, and the context in which they are attempting to make sense of it all.

CONSTRUCTION OF TEACHER EDUCATION

The pre-service teachers who served as participants in this study were members of one of two cohorts that completed the three-semester PDS together. While in the PDS, cohort members take courses together, attend seminars together, and often complete field placements in the same schools. However, there was great variation in what the cohort members recalled regarding attention to multicultural education and teaching in diverse classrooms in both their coursework and field placements. As previously discussed in Chapter Four, one of the participants, Kaci, offered her own explanation of this variation,

> Diversity is such a broad topic that it is easy to get lost in the subcomponents. Our nation is becoming more and more diverse, so, as teachers, we need to be prepared to teach a variety of learners. Our PDS has touched upon so many aspects of diversity that it has become overwhelming. It makes your head spin to think about the hundreds of possibilities to consider for any one lesson or student. So we compensate by picking the topics that are most important to us (our unique areas of expertise) because we have to start somewhere. As we become more proficient in the classroom and master certain elements of diversity, then our mind is free to take on other challenges. (Kaci, electronic response, February 1, 2007)

This is a significant insight and points to the importance of the construction of teacher education. As discussed earlier in this chapter, this study demonstrated that pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms are more complex than previous research has suggested. In the theme Providing an Interruption of Beliefs, I described the experiences, or "the clearest and most convincing contrary evidence" (Pajares, 1992, p. 317), that altered the participants' prior beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. Kaci suggested that in response to the "overwhelming" and "broad topic" of diversity, pre-service teachers "compensate by picking the topics that are most important to [them]…because [they] have to start somewhere" (Kaci, electronic response, February 1, 2007). While I would not argue with this assertion, I believe this provides only part of the answer to the question of the experiences pre-service teachers attributed to having influenced and/or challenged their beliefs. More specifically, the data suggests teacher educators reconsider the importance of knowing students and their prior experiences and the importance of field placements.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the participants who described an awareness of the importance of seeing difference recalled a previous colorblind stance toward difference as a way of demonstrating respect for "others." Some of these participants recounted additional experiences in their university coursework and field placements that supported the importance of seeing difference; other participants described these

experiences as isolated. In their typologies of an ethnic or racial identity, Banks (1994) and Helms (1993) asserted that the development of these identities is not strictly linear. While I do not mean to imply there is a linear development with regards to becoming a teacher whose practice is aligned with multicultural education, I believe there are certain realizations that must precede others. One example would be seeing difference. Before making classroom decisions that are culturally relevant/responsive and meaningful to students, teachers must have an awareness of difference. A teacher who held a colorblind stance toward difference would make classroom decisions based on her or his own experiences since she or he would assume these experiences were prototypical (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991). Another example was found in the experiences of the participants in this study who described their university coursework and field placements as refining their previously held beliefs about teaching in a diverse early childhood classroom. While these participants' experiences in the PDS assisted them as they refined, organized, and obtained tools to help them "practice the things that [they] preach" (Kaci, interview, December 6, 2006), they did not detail any new voices or perspectives that challenged them to deepen or alter these previous beliefs. Therefore, the data presented in the theme Providing an Interruption of Beliefs indicates that the participants "picked" the topics within the broad notion of diversity that resonated with them based on their previous cross-cultural experiences and prior beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. Implications for this finding are discussed in the following section of this chapter.

This study confirmed the significant influence of the cooperating teacher in the process of learning to teach. Since they have such an impact on the practices pre-service teachers are able to try during their field placements, it is crucial that teacher educators and field placement coordinators work in collaboration with school districts to place pre-

service teachers with cooperating teachers who will model practices that work toward, rather than against, multicultural education. In addition to being a model, the participants benefited from increased responsibility during their field placements, particularly during the apprentice teaching semester. They began to see themselves as the teacher and assumed the responsibility in providing instruction responsive to the strengths and needs of their students that comes with the title "teacher."

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

This study presented evidence that should encourage early childhood teacher educators to foster opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in self-reflection as they consider their beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms and how these beliefs work toward or against the goals of multicultural education. These opportunities should be integrated throughout teacher education courses, both prior to and during the semesters including field placements, so that students have ample support as they examine prior beliefs, critique these beliefs in light of "other contexts and other voices" (Britzman, 1991, p. 15), and reintegrate these beliefs into their developing practice.

As this study has demonstrated, pre-service teachers enter their teacher education programs with a range of cross-cultural experiences and beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms that have an influence on future practice (e.g., Anderson, 2001; Borko & Putnam, 1996; Calderhead, 1996; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Raths, 2001; Trotman & Kerr, 2001). Therefore, teacher educators need to understand the prior experiences and beliefs of the pre-service teachers in their courses in order to plan a range of activities that meet pre-service teachers where they are and then take them where they need to go with regards to their beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms, so that these activities are effective for providing an interruption of prior beliefs.

Although the participants recounted numerous experiences with reflection during the PDS, these reflections were often written and focused on the content of assigned articles or chapters, with little attention to reflecting on their beliefs, their practice, or the relationship between the two. Reflective practice was emphasized more with cooperating teachers and field placement supervisors according to the participants in this study. However, teaching in a diverse early childhood classroom was not a frequent topic of these conversations. Vygotsky (1978) asserted, "All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals" (p. 57). Vygotsky called internalization the process by which higher psychological processes such as thinking are developed. Thinking must occur interpersonally – between people in social contexts – before it occurs intrapersonally. Therefore, teacher education programs should provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in interactive reflections. Based on the findings from this study, a stronger emphasis on reflective practice in connection to cross-cultural experiences, field placements in diverse classroom settings, definitions of the term "diverse," and the relationship between beliefs and practice could assist pre-service teachers to consider how "every decision, action, assignment, organizational structure, and communicative act works either toward or against the goals of multicultural education" (Grant & Zozakiewicz, 1995, p. 272). Without such reflections, pre-service teachers often return to their experiences as students, since they believe these experiences are prototypical (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991).

While Kaci and other participants called the amount of information learned about diversity in the PDS "overwhelming," the following quote by Emma represents other participants who said that in the courses taken during the PDS "there hasn't been much on teaching in a diverse classroom,"

> I feel like when we talked about it most was before the PDS when there wasn't as much to apply it to. And now it would probably be more relevant, if it were in the PDS, because I know it's been consistently easier taking these classes to have a student that you are thinking of that you can pull examples from and kind of use. And say, "Well, I have this student. She does this and this. She's good at this, this, and this. She struggles with…I need to find a way to help her." But so far in the recent PDS classes there hasn't been much on teaching in a diverse classroom. (Emma, interview, February 27, 2007)

The importance of this insight provides the basis for the final implication for teacher education. Since pre-service teachers benefit from having a context in which to apply the content of their university coursework, it will be important to integrate conversations and courses about teaching in diverse classrooms throughout the degree program to assist pre-service teachers in connecting theory, as well as their beliefs, to practice.

LIMITATIONS

One limitation of this study is that as a pre-service teacher the participants were guests in their cooperating teachers' classrooms for the three semesters of the PDS. Because of this, the participants were influenced by cooperating teachers with a wide range of experiences and beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. Since cooperating teachers (Su, 1992) and observations of practices that "work" (Zanting et al., 2003) have been called significant factors that influence the beliefs and practices of pre-service teachers, the participants may or may not have been placed with cooperating teachers whose pedagogical practice were reflective of recommended approaches to multicultural education. Even the pre-service teachers who supported elements of multicultural education or culturally responsive pedagogy may have found it difficult to implement the ideas they learned in university coursework once they entered their cooperating teachers' classrooms. As previous research has demonstrated, cooperating teachers and observations of their practice can serve to erase or significantly minimize the impact of teacher education coursework. Britzman (1991) referred to this as the "lure

of the traditional" (p. 209), where pre-service teachers reproduce the status quo as a way of aligning and complying with their cooperating teachers' practice.

In this study, my focus was solely on the pre-service teachers and their beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms. Absent were the voices, perspectives, and beliefs of the cooperating teachers, university professors, cohort coordinators, and field placement supervisors with whom the participants were associated. These voices could have provided an additional context for the experiences of the participants while enrolled at State University and the PDS.

The third limitation of the study relates to the second phase of data collection. The pre-service teachers, and not their cooperating teachers or their students, were the focus of my observations. Because of this focus, I was given approval to document only the words and actions of the pre-service teachers. Since teaching involves more than the words and actions of the teacher, I did not feel my field notes were able to capture or document the fullness of the lessons. If the approval would have been worded to include the students in the classroom, I would have been able to more closely examine the interactions between the pre-service teachers and her students.

Finally, if this was a longitudinal study, I would have been able to examine and observe how the participants' beliefs and practices changed throughout the three-semester PDS. The data presented in this study is limited to the participants' espoused beliefs and the ways in which their beliefs where challenged and have evolved over time. In addition, the observational data was limited to only three of the 15 participants during only one semester of the PDS. In a longitudinal study, I would have been able to observe and interview the participants across the three semesters, providing them with additional opportunities to reflect on their beliefs and their practice and providing me with a better understanding of how their beliefs and practice evolved during the three-semester PDS.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was an exploration of pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms and the experiences they attributed to having influenced and/or challenged these beliefs. The findings of this study point to the complexity of pre-service teachers' beliefs about diversity, the important role of reflection, and the construction of teacher education. However, several questions remain that deserve further examination with regard to pre-service teachers and their beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms.

What is the relationship between pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms and their practice? Although this study included observations of three pre-service teachers, these observations were included to provide richer descriptions of their beliefs rather than as a way to examine the connection between their beliefs and practice.

In what ways do interactive reflections support the emergence of a culturally relevant/responsive practice in pre-service teachers? The data from this study suggested that the pre-service teachers had limited opportunities to articulate their beliefs about teaching in diverse classrooms in their university coursework or during their field placements. The pre-service teachers who were placed in classrooms where conversations about teaching in diverse classrooms were ongoing with cooperating teachers continued to reflect on their beliefs and the experiences that provided an interruption of beliefs. However, more research is needed to explore how these interactive reflections support pre-service teachers' development.

How can teacher educators build on the experiences that provided an interruption of beliefs so that they continue to impact both pre-service teachers' beliefs and their practice? While engaging in conversations with professors and cooperating teachers were

found to play a role in this process, additional research is needed to examine other activities or experiences that can help pre-service teachers continue their journey toward becoming teachers for all children rather than returning to their prior beliefs after they begin teaching in her or his own classroom (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Raths, 2001).

What are pre-service teachers taking from university coursework and field placements with regards to multicultural education? How does this align with the intended message of university professors and cooperating teachers? While this study provided some answers to the former question, the absence of the voices of university professors and cooperating teachers, as well as cohort coordinators and field placement supervisors, points to the need for additional research to explore the alignment between the message and the understanding pre-service teachers are taking from this message.

How does the development of personal and professional identities support the development of a culturally relevant/responsive teacher? While there is an extensive body of research on the development of personal (i.e., racial, ethnic, gender) identities and teaching, there is less research on the development of a professional identity and the emergence of a teacher whose practice aligns with multicultural education.

The four years spent in teacher education programs, and more specifically the 18 months of the Professional Development Sequence, is a relatively short amount of time compared to the previous 18 or more years of experiences pre-service teachers bring with them to their teacher education programs. For the majority of the pre-service teachers in this study, they had minimal cross-cultural experiences prior to their enrollment in State University. The participants recognized their lack of knowledge and experiences with individuals different from themselves. For many White teachers, both pre-service and in-service, their limited cross-cultural experiences do not “provide the knowledge, analysis,

and critical thinking skills about racism and other 'isms' to create a solid foundation" (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey, 2006, p. 12) for culturally relevant/responsive teaching. The participants in this study referred to this lack of knowledge as a reason for wanting to focus on multicultural education later in their teaching careers once they had gained confidence and experience with teaching and diversity. Echoing Derman-Sparks and Ramsey, "[b]ut the children won't wait; teachers need to avoid becoming paralyzed and must risk acting, even before they feel totally ready" (p. 13). More research is needed to examine the role teacher education can play to help pre-service teachers take action so that they work toward, rather than against, the goals of multicultural education.

This study was conducted to explore pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching in diverse early childhood classrooms and the experiences they attributed to having influenced and/or challenged their beliefs. What I hope this study has provided is a deeper understanding of the complex nature of pre-service teachers' beliefs with regards to diversity and the experiences that helped this group of pre-service teachers reconsider their prior beliefs about teaching students who are diverse. The complexity of educating future teachers for increasingly diverse classrooms is a challenge facing the fields of multicultural education and teacher education. As research on pre-service teachers and multicultural education continues, teacher educators will be better prepared to assist graduates to enter diverse classrooms with the dispositions, attitudes, and tools needed to work with all children.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. PERSONAL BACKGROUND

    a. How do you describe your own identity?
    b. What do you include in the word "diversity"?
    c. Based on your definition of diversity, did you attend elementary school with a diverse population of students? Middle school? High school?
    d. What other experiences have you had with people you consider to be diverse?
    e. When you were growing up, how was diversity talked about among family and friends?

2. PLANNING AND INSTRUCTION

    a. What do you consider when planning for instruction in a culturally diverse early childhood classroom?
    b. Do you use knowledge of the family background of your students in planning? If so, how have you obtained this information and how is it used in your planning?
    c. Do you consider the individual strengths and needs of your students as you plan your lessons? If so, can you provide of an example of how you have done this?
    d. How do you ensure that your lessons are relevant and meaningful for your students?
    e. How do students learn? Where does knowledge come from? What role does the teacher play in student learning? Who is responsible for student learning in your lessons?
    f. How do you incorporate your beliefs about learning in the lessons you plan?
    g. What instructional strategies do you use when teaching?
    h. Do you think it is important to help students connect to their racial and cultural identities? If so, in what ways do you approach this?
    i. How do you define multicultural education? How have you applied this definition in the lessons you have taught?
    j. In what ways have you made an effort to build relationships with your students?
    k. Do you view your classroom as a community of learners? In what ways do you try to build community?
    l. What do you see as challenges and opportunities in teaching in a culturally diverse classroom?

3. INFLUENCES ON BELIEFS ABOUT DIVERSITY

a. University Coursework
    i. Talk about your coursework at the university. In which courses was the focus on teaching diverse populations?
    ii. In what ways did your professors discuss teaching culturally diverse students?
    iii. Was diversity discussed in other coursework (such as methods courses, courses in the Professional Development Sequence)?
    iv. Has teaching in culturally diverse settings been the topic of cohort seminars?
    v. How has your university coursework challenged your beliefs about teaching culturally diverse learners?
    vi. How have you incorporated ideas from your coursework in your teaching?

b. Field Placements
    i. Tell me about your field placement. Would you describe this school as culturally diverse?
    ii. Do you and your cooperating teacher discuss effective teaching for the culturally diverse students in your classroom?
    iii. What types of experiences do you and your cooperating teacher provide for students still acquiring English? Is their native language(s) incorporated into the classroom?
    iv. What involvement have you had with the families of the students in your class? In what ways are the families involved in the classroom?
    v. What have you learned about teaching in culturally diverse classrooms from your field placement experiences?
    vi. Have your field experiences challenged your beliefs about teaching culturally diverse learners?
    vii. How have you incorporated ideas from your field placements/cooperating teachers in your teaching?

c. Personal Experiences
    i. What other experiences have you had (i.e., volunteer work, community involvement, personal interactions) that have influenced your beliefs about teaching culturally diverse learners?
    ii. How have you incorporated these experiences in your teaching?

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